CONTEXT OVER FOUNDATION

Dewey and Marx

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CONTEXT OVER FOUNDATION

Dewey and Marx

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INTRODUCTION

> "I should venture to assert that the most pervasive fallacy of philosophic thinking goes back to neglect of context."[1]
>
> John Dewey

> "...philosophers do not grow like mushrooms, out of the earth; they are the outgrowth of their period, their nation, whose most subtle, delicate and invisible juices abound in the philosophical ideas."[2]
>
> Karl Marx

Few issues are more heatedly debated in contemporary philosophy circles than that of contextualism vs. foundationalism. The genesis for the debate was the publication in 1979 of Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, which announced the death of traditional philosophy. By "traditional" here is meant the quest for a certain or apodictic bedrock upon which an overall general theory or schema might be erected. This approach, for Rorty, characterized most previous philosophy, but especially the era from Descartes to Kant. Further, the three major philosophic thinkers of the 20th century, Dewey, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, each initially tried to construct a foundational philosophy but

> each of the three, in his later work, broke free of the Kantian conception of philosophy as foundational, and spent his time warning us against those very temptations to which he himself had once succumbed. Thus their later work is therapeutic rather than constructive, edifying rather than systematic, designed to make the reader question his own motives for philosophizing rather than to supply him with a new philosophical program.[3]

This attack on foundationalism was impressive in that it transcended the boundaries of three particular schools of philosophic thought, *e.g.*, analytic philosophy, continental philosophy, and pragmatism. Nonetheless, it, perhaps inevitably, brought forth the criticism that, in trying to show what various thinkers had in common, it omitted important features of their thought. This criticism is particularly acute when one turns to the interpretation of John Dewey, whose view of philosophy, as arising from, and subsequently informing needs,

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questions, and concerns of a particular culture, is replaced by a view of philosophy as merely narrative, as conversational. As one commentator put it, the "most obvious result of Rorty's replacement of criticism, evaluation, and work with edification, conversation, and play is the loss of philosophy as a tool in social reconstruction".[4]

The issue of context vs. foundation is also of immediate concern when one turns to the work of Karl Marx. Marx can be, and has been, read as a reductionist thinker for whom philosophic thought is controlled by the economic "base" or, "sub-structure", and for whom the philosophic endeavor is ultimately to be replaced by the proletariat. Such approaches have, appropriately, been rejected in favor of a more "organic model". Thus, for example, in *Marx's Interpretation of History*, Melvin Rader argues that, in

> recognizing that philosophy, science, morality, and art often transcend the relativities of class and economic period, Marx shows that he is not entrapped by the base-superstructure model. He is aware that all these modes of culture have their intrinsic norms of truth or validity, and he recognizes that all have an important impact upon the base.[5]

Differently stated, Marx, no less than Dewey, was dissatisfied with a view of philosophy as foundational, as merely reflecting or copying a pre-existent static reality or ideal. This is obvious in his oft-quoted statement that "philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it".[6] But whereas Dewey's contextualism has been shorn of its political/social dimension in the current debate, Marx' contextualism is oftentimes undervalued in favor of a more objective economic determinism. In the first case, philosophy would become fantasy; in the second, philosophy would give way to propaganda.

The present series of articles attempts to avoid such extreme alternatives. While centering on the general theme of context vs. foundation, the articles are clustered into three specific themes, though some overlap is unavoidable. The areas of focus are: the human context, the political/cultural context, and the metaphysical context.

Turning to the first of these, in 'From "Individual" to "Subject": Marx and Dewey on the Person', Vincent Colapietro explores how both thinkers have deepened our understanding of the person by replacing the free, conscious individual of classical liberalism with the situated, divided (conscious/unconscious) subject of postmodernity. To move from "individual" to "subject" means abandoning the isolated individual as the foundation of the social order, and accepting the historical context as the matrix of human subjectivity. However, for both Marx and

Dewey, the historicity of the human subject does not preclude the universality of human nature. This is, at least, what Colapietro endeavors to show near the conclusion of his paper, a work which pays close attention to a variety of texts by both thinkers. In 'Science, Psychology and Human Values in the Context of Dewey's Critique of Marx', William L. McBride has selected five Deweyan references to Marx, made approximately one decade apart from each other. These texts, he argues, show a considerable interest in, as well as some substantial misunderstandings of, Marx' philosophy on Dewey's part. Going further, he shows that Dewey's charge that Marxism "is a thoroughly anti-scientific procedure" is not valid, although it makes some sense as a critique of Leninism, whereas some of Dewey's criticisms of Marx concerning psychology are found to be more plausible. Finally, McBride finds Dewey and Marx to be much closer than Dewey believed with respect to assigning priority over economic considerations to human values that are not strictly economic. In 'Text, Context, and the Existential Limit: A Jamesian Strain in Dewey and Marx', William J. Gavin argues that James' doctrine of "the will to believe" becomes operative at a crucial stage in the reconstructed outlooks of both Marx and Dewey. Dewey moved from content to form by choosing, in a Jamesian fashion, the pragmatic method of science; in moving from philosophy to the proletariat, Marx moved from form to content, again, through exercising the will to believe. More generally, it would seem that any non-foundational or contextualist position demands, at some level, a Jamesian will to believe. An epilogue to the piece argues, through a discussion of Michael Ryan's *Marxism and Reconstruction* and Richard Rorty's *Consequences of Pragmatism*, against reducing the context to the text in either the outlook of Dewey or that of Marx.

The second area of focus is that of the political/cultural context. In 'Politics, Culture and Society in Marx and Dewey', Garry M. Brodsky argues that both Marx and Dewey are postmodern, contextualist thinkers. After a brief discussion of postmodernity and contextualism, he sketches Dewey's socio-political views and thus clarifies Dewey's position as well as the postmodern approach to political philosophy. He shows how Dewey attacks Marxism on the grounds that it is foundationalist rather than postmodern, but presents some grounds for holding that, even if this is true of Marxism, it is not true of Marx' philosophy. The upshot of his paper is that thinkers sympathetic to Marx and to Dewey would do well to stress the postmodern features of Marx' thought and the radical features of Dewey's thought.

In 'Dewey's Understanding of Marx and Marxism', James Campbell lays out the general framework of John Dewey's beliefs about capitalism and Communism. He explores, among other themes,

Dewey's critique of the operations of capitalism in America, his familiarity with the works of Marx and with American Marxists, the Communist Party in the United States, Dewey's own proposed brand of democratic socialism, and the relative importance of political democracy and economic justice. His article is intended both as part of an examination of the historical influence of Marx in America and as part of a consideration of the overall contribution of Dewey to American social thought. In 'Philosophy and Politics: A Historical Approach to Marx and Dewey', Peter T. Manicas argues that both Marx and Dewey advocated a non-foundationalist politics. The critical means for this was the idea of democracy, viz., that those affected by the consequences of acts had to be participants in the decisions which had those consequences. The problem of modern politics, then, is not the loss of foundations for a politics, in human nature, God, or history, but rather that of the absence of a genuine democratic politics. Manicas agrees that Marx was clear about this, that, for him, the 'state' was inconsistent with democracy, that while in agreement with anarchists over goals, Marx was essentially correct in arguing, against them, that one had to use the state in order to eliminate it. But, Manicas maintains, Marx was wrong in supposing that advancing capitalist development would generate the political capacities of "the working class" to reconstitute the social order. This error led, by the end of the century, to a redefinition of Marxist politics, with disasterous consequences for the future. Manicas argues that Dewey and Marx were close as regards their views of the alienated politics of the state and of democracy. But Dewey, responding to the Marxism of his day, rightly rejected "class politics". On the other hand, he did not offer a clear and viable alternative. Manicas concludes by suggesting that the valuable insights of both Marx and Dewey might be conjoined for a refashioned democratic project.

In 'The Politics After Deconstruction: Rorty Dewey and Marx', Alfonso J. Damico argues that foundational political theory (*e.g.*, Rawls, Ackerman) is often more backward than forward looking, more concerned with the philosophical foundations of political principles than with their *modus operandi*. He argues that Rorty, Dewey and Marx are all non- or anti-foundational political thinkers, and that each provides an account of politics and the role of political reflection minus foundational commitments. Going further, each of these argues that the manner of doing something generates its own criteria for controlling what is to count as a true or just practice. Whether conceptualized as a "conversation" (Rorty), as "inquiry" (Dewey), or in terms of a "movement" (Marx), it is practice itself, Damico maintains, not epistemology and axiology, that privileges one or another account of political life.

The last area of focus is the broadest - that of the metaphysical

context. In 'Marx and Dewey on the Unity of Theory and Practice' Gerald J. Galgan first delineates the classical view of human life as a "festival", as found in the ancient Greek tradition, with its clear distinction between the observers, *theoria*, or philosophers, and those involved in the actual proceedings, *i.e.*, praxis; he then traces the distinction between praxis and poiesis, as found in Aristotle. Galgan carefully traces the rejection of these distinctions as it takes place in Marx and Dewey, in whose outlooks observers give way to pilgrims, wayfarers involved in history. In this latter outlook, for a person to know anything he must transform or remake that thing. Galgan's contention is that the new status given to individual particularity in so-called modern empiricism actually has its origins in the nominalist thinkers of the medieval world, especially William of Ockham; he further argues that Marx' and Dewey's unification of theory and practice stems from this tradition, however much they may have forgotten it; and, finally, that just as philosophy gave way to theological input or faith in that medieval tradition, so too the Marxian and Deweyan unifications of theory and practice, in the end, are not positions that can justify themselves in purely philosophical or metaphysical terms. In 'Naturalism, Dialectical Materialism, and an Ontology of Constitutive Relations' John Ryder argues that, despite their many and important metaphysical differences, the traditions of modern American naturalism and dialectical materialism exhibit an ontology of constitutive relations which distinguishes them from other major philosophic schools. For Ryder, this point about their respective ontological commitments can best be seen through two aspects of their concepts of nature. First, both traditions regard nature to be exhaustive of what exists, and thus reject any form of an absolute or supernatural reality. Second, nature is not constituted by ontological simples, or, in other words, an ontology of substance is rejected, and natural phenomena are seen as constitutively relational.

* * *

In sum, the articles examine Dewey and Marx from several perspectives, disclosing both similarities and differences. Viewed as a whole they tend to reject at least an overly simplistic foundationalism on the part of both philosophers. Finally, the articles tend towards the conclusion that, while giving up objectivity or certainty, neither Marx nor Dewey would be satisfied with a view of philosophy as merely conversational or playful. This is only as it should be, for to set up a new dualism of certainty vs. playfulness would be to reintroduce the very type of "false problematic" which both philosophers argued so strongly against.

It is perhaps not inappropriate to end with a reference to another noted contextualist philosopher in the American tradition, namely, William James. At the end of the Hibbert Lectures, given at Manchester College, Oxford in 1908-09, and subsequently published under the book title *A Pluralistic Universe*, James says:

> I have now finished these poor lectures, and ... [m]y only hope is that they may possibly have proved suggestive; and if indeed they have been suggestive of one point of method, I am almost willing to let all the other suggestions go. That point is that *it is high time for the basis of discussion in these questions to be broadened and thickened up*. [If this can be done] I will say, as I now say, with the cheerfulest of hearts, 'Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes, but bring the fuller minstrel in.'[7]

It is hoped that in some small way these essays have contributed to the "thickening up of the context" which James so insightfully called to our attention.

NOTES

1. John Dewey, 'Context and Thought' in *On Experience, Nature and Freedom*, edited, with an introduction by Richard J. Bernstein, New York, The Bobbs Merrill Company, Inc., 1960, p. 92.
2. As quoted in Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 135. (Original source: *Rheinische Zeitung*, July 14, 1842)
3. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 5-6. See also Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1982.
4. James Campbell, 'Rorty's Use of Dewey', *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XXII, #2, 1984, p. 182.
5. Melvin Rader, *Marx' Interpretation of History,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 53.
6. Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach' in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy,* ed. by Lewis S. Feuer, New York, Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., 1959, p. 245.
7. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, New York, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909, pp. 330-31.

PART I

THE HUMAN CONTEXT

VINCENT MICHAEL COLAPIETRO

From 'Individual' to 'Subject': Marx and Dewey on the Person

Both Karl Marx and John Dewey insisted that philosophical reflection is deeply embedded in its cultural context. Marx wrote that philosophers "are the outgrowth of their period, their nation, whose most subtle, delicate and invisible juices abound in the philosophical ideas".[1] Dewey claimed that philosophy "sustains the closest connection with the history of culture, with the succession of changes in civilization".[2] For him, this connection is not only close, it is intrinsic.[3] For both, philosophy is first and foremost its role in the development of culture.[4] Thinkers within a particular culture are expressions of that culture, whether they are conscious of this fact or not.

Marx and Dewey sought to make philosophers aware of the subtle yet powerful way in which cultural conflicts shape philosophical discourse. While the historic objective of philosophy has been to demonstrate the existence of an immutable order[5], its future task "is to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own day".[6] If philosophy undertakes this task, then it is bound to examine why human beings are alienated from one another.[7] Such an examination both grows out of the conflicts in our culture and is directed toward the resolution of these conflicts. If philosophy truly devotes itself to the detection and resolution of these conflicts, then it ceases to be a purely passive reflection of culture and becomes a potentially effective means of change. The call for such a redirection of philosophy is explicit in both Marx and Dewey. In the words of Marx, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."[8] In those of Dewey, "Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men."[9]

Philosophical theories should primarily be examined not in reference to themselves but in reference to experience. But this refers principally not to our unique personal experience but to our shared cultural experience. In fact, our personal experience is largely a product of our social environment. "All of the actions of the individual bear the stamp of his community as assuredly as does the language he speaks."[10] Not only our actions and language but also our consciousness bears this stamp. Thus, while philosophy is directly an

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exploration of our shared cultural experience, it is indirectly a probing of our personal experience.

For Marx and Dewey, then, social experience offers the primary material for philosophical reflection.

> But this experience is already overlaid and saturated with the products of the reflection of past generations and by-gone ages. It is filled with interpretations, classifications, due to sophisticated thought, which have become incorporated into what seems to be fresh, naive empirical material.[11]

Because of this, philosophy must become a critique of prejudices.[12] In this capacity, philosophical reflection is a kind of intellectual disrobing: it attempts to expose the way in which theories reflect and perpetuate the conflicts within a culture.[13]

Hence, Marx and Dewey have helped change our conception of philosophy. They have moved beyond the antithesis of theory and practice: not only is philosophy viewed as the theory of practice[14], it is also seen as itself a kind of practice or, more accurately, an indispensable moment within human praxis.[15] In addition to removing this antithesis, they were instrumental in effecting the transition from foundationalism to contextualism, that is, the transition from the perspective that inquiry necessarily rests upon an ultimate and immutable foundation to the viewpoint that investigation always occurs within a provisional and contingent context.[16] While this description is accurate, it should be qualified in two respects. First, it is anachronistic: "foundationalism" and "contextualism" are terms we would use today to describe the shift in perspective wrought by (among others) Marx and Dewey, not the terms that they themselves used.

Second, this description highlights a fundamental affinity between the Marxian and the Deweyan perspectives to the neglect of an equally fundamental opposition. This opposition, no less than the affinity, might be expressed in terms of the contrast between "foundationalism" and "contextualism". In other words, there is a sense in which Marx is, from a Deweyan viewpoint, a foundationalist; while in turn there is a sense in which Dewey is, from a Marxian viewpoint, a foundationalist. Thus, while it is true to say that both of these thinkers were instrumental in effecting the transition from foundationalism to contextualism, it is also true to say that neither is entirely free from all forms of foundationalism - at least from the perspective of the other.

Dewey consciously attempted to effect a transition from absolutism to experimentalism. This transition meant, in part, abandoning the endeavor to see reality *sub specie aeternitatis* and, therefore, accepting the challenge of examing it *sub specie temporis*. Dewey went so far as

to identify reality with process, existence with event.[17] This shift also meant philosophy's forswearing "inquiry after absolute origins and absolute finalities in order to explore specific values and the specific conditions that generate them".[18]

It is significant that Dewey saw Marx as a representative of absolutism: Marx' allegedly scientific socialism flowed from an absolutistic logic rather than from an experimental inquiry and, thus, failed to achieve a truly scientific status. If Dewey were alive today, he might charge Marx with being a foundationalist, for Dewey viewed Marx as a thinker who professed an infallible grasp of the immutable laws of human history.[19] These laws function in Marx' system as a foundation, a final and fixed basis upon which all inquiry must rest.

While Dewey had reservations about calling himself a "socialist" and held that his experimentalism went deeper than any other "-ism"[20], Marx saw himself as first and foremost a socialist. However, he endeavored to transcend socialism as a utopian ideal and to formulate it as a scientific program. Utopian socialists

> reject all political, and especially all revolutionary, action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavor, by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by force of example, to pave the way for a new social Gospel.[21]

So Marx would respond to Dewey's experimentalism. Just as Marx' socialism might be construed by Dewey to be a form of foundationalism, so might Dewey's experimentalism be interpreted by Marx to be a form of the same. For all his insistence upon the contextual function of moral principles, Dewey appears to have ruled out *a priori* the use of force as an instrument of change. Dewey's commitment to the instrumentality of rational persuasion - that is, his faith in the power of the democratic ideal - defined the way in which all social conflict must be resolved. All of his specific proposals rest upon this faith as their ultimate foundation.[22] Indeed, this faith is as fixed and final for Dewey as, say, the *cogito* is for Descartes (to select one outstanding example of the foundationalist thesis).

Even if there is a sense in which Marx is a foundationalist from a Deweyan perspective and *vice versa*, it remains true that the overall effect of their respective systems was to assist in the transition from foundationalism to contextualism. With this shift, philosophy once again becomes a kind of midwifery: its task is to assist in the birth of those ideals and institutions appropriate to its time and place.[23] These ideals and institutions can only be determined by a painstaking analysis and courageous critique of the contemporary context in which human agents are destined to live.[24] Thus, Marx wrote: "We do not attempt

dogmatically to prefigure the future, but want to find the new world only through criticism of the old."[25] According to Dewey, "Ideals express possibilities; but they are genuine ideals only in so far as they are possibilities of what is now moving." [26] The prime function of philosophical reflection is to render intelligible and coherent the possibilities of experience, especially human experience in its consciously communal forms.[27] The present is pregnant with possibilities; the mission of the philosopher is to assist in the realization of these possibilities.

In addition to being instrumental in effecting the transition from foundationalism to contextualism, Marx and Dewey were pivotal in displacing the concept of individual by that of subject. In the words of Kaja Silverman, "The term 'subject' designates a quite different semantic and ideological space from that indicated by the more familiar term 'individual'." [28] "Individual" dates from the Renaissance, "and it still bears the traces of the dominant philosophical systems of that time - systems which afforded to consciousness the very highest premium."[29] In contrast, the concept of subjectivity marks a radical break with this philosophical tradition by bringing the unconscious into the consciousness of the West. Thus, human subjectivity must be seen as an internally divided reality: it is split between a conscious and an unconscious region.

Both Marx and Dewey acknowledged the split nature of the human subject. Marx' conception of *Kritik* obviously presupposes that the ideas of which we are originally unconscious are almost always more fundamental than those of which we are readily conscious. The objective of *Kritik* is to make conscious what is unconscious, to render explicit what is implicit. This enables us to see through our illusions. And it is only by grasping our illusions as such that we can free ourselves from them; we are thereby able to liberate ourselves from those internalized conflicts which blind us in our self-awareness and cripple us in our self-determination.[30] In fact *Kritik* is rooted in our experience of emancipation through insight, that is,

> the experience of an emancipation by means of a critical insight into relationships of power, the strength of which lies, at least in part, in the fact that these relationships have not been seen through.[31]

Such an experience is possible only because humans are divided (conscious/unconscious).

Dewey observed that, according to classical liberalism (*i.e.*, political individualism articulated in a thorough-going way),

> [d]esire and pleasure were both open and above-board affairs. The

> mind was seen as if always in the bright sunlight, having no hidden recesses, no unexplorable nooks, nothing underground. Its operations were like moves in a fair game of chess.[32]
>
> Mind was 'consciousness,' and the latter was a clear, transparent, self-revealing medium in which wants, efforts, and purposes were exposed without distortion.[33]

In contrast to this view, Dewey insisted that "conduct proceeds from conditions which are largely out of focal attention, and which can be discovered and brought to light only by inquiries more exacting than those which teach us the concealed relationships involved in gross physical phenomena".[34] In short, while subjects are constituted by their relationships, they are not necessarily conscious of these relationships. We have no more infallibly clear and distinct desires than we have absolutely clear and distinct ideas. *Cupio* occupies no more privileged a position than *cogito*; consequently, the desiring individual does not provide a firm foundation upon which to build a socio-economic order, any more than the isolated *cogito* provides a secure basis upon which to construct the epistemological edifice. Both the desiring and the inquiring individual are in fact historically conditioned beings. This makes it impossible for them to serve as ahistorically given foundations.

In light of the above, it should be obvious that the human subject is not merely a divided being (conscious/unconscious); he is also a culturally over-determined being. If we conceive the person as individual rather than as subject, we see the person's thinking as being in no way coerced either by the force of material conditions or by the thoughts of other people; the individual is portrayed as a free intellectual agent.[35] In contrast, the subject is seen not as a primordially free source of thought and action, but rather as a being so deeply embedded in its time and place as to be largely (though not completely) constrained in its cognition and conduct.

It is important to note here that the conceptualization of the person in terms of subjectivity rather than individuality is itself a move in the direction of contextualism. For the subject as such is always already situated in a context which is constitutive of what the subject is. Apart from its continuous and dynamic interactions with the natural and social world, the subject is a non-entity.[36] It is what it is through these interactions.

The introduction of the subject does not involve the espousal of subjectivism; rather it involves the overcoming of this doctrine. According to Dewey,

> Every type of culture has experienced resistance and frustration. These events are interpreted according to the bias dominating a particular type of culture. To the modern European mind they have been interpreted as results of the opposed existence of subject and object as independent forms of Being.[37]

The focal concern of modern Western philosophy has been this opposition between subject and object.[38] In epistemological controversies, the opposition has taken the form of an alleged gulf between knower and known; in moral controversies (taking "moral" in an inclusive sense, a sense that includes politics and economics), the opposition has taken the form of a felt distance between self and other or that collection of others called "society". Both Marx and Dewey saw these dualisms within modern thought as reflections of divisions within modern life. For them,

> philosophic dualism is but a formulated recognition of an impasse in life; an impotence in interaction, inability to make effective transition, limitation of power to regulate and thereby to understand.[39]

In short, both Marx and Dewey saw philosophical dualisms as symptoms of social disorder. In particular, "the dualism erected between the ego and the world of things and persons represents failure to attain solution to the problem set by this ambiguous nature of the self".[40] Dewey describes this ambiguity thus: "Existentially speaking, a human individual is distinctive opacity of bias and preference conjoined with plasticity and permeability of needs and likings. One trait tends to isolation, discreteness; the other trait to connection, continuity. This ambivalent character is rooted in nature."[41]. However, it is distorted by history.

The way to overcome these philosophical dualisms and, thus, to expose these social disorders is by framing a conception of the person which exhibits that he is not necessarily opposed to others. This requires a critique of individualism, the dominant prejudice of bourgeois society. At the beginning of the *Grundrisse*, Marx wrote:

> In this society of free competition, the individual appears detached from the natural bonds *etc.* which in earlier historic periods make him the accessory of a definite and limited human conglomerate.[42]

In the imagination of the bourgeoisie and their ideologues,

> this eighteenth-century individual - the product on the one side of the dissolution of the feudal forms of society, on the other side of

> the new forces of production developed since the sixteenth century - appears as an ideal, whose existence they project into the past. Not as a historic result but as history's point of departure.[43]

> But the epoch which produces this standpoint, that of the isolated individual, is also precisely that of the hitherto most developed social (from this standpoint, general [or encompassing]) relations.[44]

Thus, the fundamental contradiction within capitalist society may be expressed as follows: it is a social order that generates asocial and even anti-social individuals. Moreover, the question of how such isolated individuals can form society is no more solvable than the question of how the disembodied *cogito* can come to know the world. Just as a disembodied human consciousness cannot know the world, so isolated human beings cannot form a society. Hence, we must reject the modern (*i.e.*, bourgeois) notion of the "natural individual" and return to the Aristotelian conception of the human person as a communal being. In fact, for Marx, the human being is in the most literal sense a political animal.[45]

Dewey observed that because an individual can be disassociated from this, that, or the other association, "there grows up in the mind an image of the residual individual who is not a member of any association at all".[46] It is due to this assumption, and this assumption alone, that there arises

> the unreal question of how individuals come to be united in societies and groups: the individual and the social are now opposed to each other, and there is the problem of 'reconciling' them.[47]

> Singular things act, but they act together. Nothing has been discovered which acts in entire isolation.[48]

There is no point in asking how individuals come to be associated. For every natural existent has, in addition to qualitative and intrinsic boundaries, dynamic affinities for connection and union.[49] Such an existent "is an energy of attraction, expansion and supplementation".[50] The ties and bonds of associated life are "spontaneous and uncalculated manifestations of this aspect of human selfhood.[51] "There is, however, an intelligible question about human association."[52] This question concerns how singular human beings come to be associated in just those ways which give human communities their distinctive traits. It can be posed at various levels of generality. At the most general level, this question takes the form: What factors differentiate human communities from

other natural associations, *e.g.*, from "assemblies of electrons, unions of trees in forests, swarms of insects, herds of sheep, and constellations of stars"?[53] At a more specific level, we can ask: What are the particular modes of association which generate this particular sort of subject?

For Dewey, no less than Marx, institutions "are means of creating individuals".[54] Only in a physical sense is individuality an original datum; in the moral sense it is an emergent function of associated living. If this fact is borne in mind, then all social arrangements, especially the most influential ones, must be viewed in their educative effect - that is, "with reference to the types of individuals they foster".[55]

When Marx stressed that humans are political animals and Dewey that they were associated beings, these two thinkers were attempting to unmask the individualist ethos as a prejudice of a particular culture. The displacement of "individual" by "subject" thus meant rejecting the image of persons as originally isolated in favor of the portrait of them as indissolubly social. But, in addition to bringing into focus the ineradicably communal character of human beings, the notion of subject was also intended to highlight the fact that humans are active and suffering beings. The isolated, disembodied *cogito* of so much modern thought is replaced by a communal, incarnate agent. However, the agency of such a being cannot be separated from its passivity - its actions from its sufferings.

In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Marx wrote:

> Man is directly a natural being. As a natural being and as a living natural being he is on the one hand furnished with natural powers of life - he is an active natural being ... On the other hand, as a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being he is a suffering, conditioned and limited being, like animals and plants.[56]

In *Experience and Nature* Dewey attempted to define "object" and "subject" in an empirical way. So defined, subject and object do not designate independent forms of reality but interdependent factors within experience. As such factors, the object is that which objects, while the subject is that which suffers.[57] The object is (as the word itself suggests) that which throws itself in the way of effort; thus, it is "that to which frustration is due. But it is also the objective; the final and eventual consummation, an integrated secure independent state of affairs."[58] Hence, the most basic empirical meanings of "object" are (1) that which resists the efforts of the subject and (2) that which consummates the endeavors of the subject. In the first sense, anything functions as an object when it counters effort; in the second sense, when it embodies achievement.

While the object is that which objects to the efforts of the subject, the subject is that which is subjected to the resistance of the object. But, "it is also that which attempts subjection of hostile conditions; that which takes the immediate initiative in remaking the situation as it stands".[59] Thus, the most fundamental empirical senses of "subject" are (1) that which suffers the resistance of objects and (2) that which initiates the reconstruction of the situation in which it is embedded. In the first sense anything functions as a subject when it is the locus of suffering; in the second sense, when it is a source of reconstruction.

Both the object and the subject are accessible to human experience and operative within the natural world. Indeed,

> if we were to take our clue from the present empirical situation, including the scientific notion of evolution (biological continuity) and the existing arts of control of nature, subject and object would be treated as occupying the same natural world.[60]

In particular, if biological continuity be accepted, then "the subject of experience is at least an animal, continuous with other organic forms in a process of more complex organization".[61] Moreover, if the human person is seen first and foremost as a biological organism, then human experience is principally "not knowledge, but ways of doing and suffering".[62] While experience includes within itself both doing and suffering, it

> is primarily a process of undergoing: a process of standing something; of suffering and passion, of affection, in the literal sense of these words. The organism has to endure, to undergo, the consequences of its own actions.[63]

Thus, the subject of experience is a living organism and, in turn, this living organism is an agent-patient.[64]

Subjects so conceived do not have to prove the existence of the world; rather they must prove themselves in their struggle for survival. Indeed,

> if anything seems adequately grounded empirically it is the existence of a world which resists the characteristic functions of the subject of experience, which goes its way, in some respects, independently of these functions, and which frustrates our hopes and intentions.[65]

The similarities between this position and the one articulated by Marx in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* are too

obvious to require commentary. Let me conclude this part of the discussion, then, by focusing upon how Dewey himself concludes his explication of "subject" and "object".

When defined empirically, "subject" and "object" do not designate separate modes of being but distinguishable aspects of natural transactions. "Subjective and objective distinguished as factors in a regulated effort at modification of the environing world have an intelligible meaning. Subjectivism as an 'ism' converts this historic, relative and instrumental status and function into something absolute and fixed", thereby depriving the terms "subject" and "object" of any intelligible meaning.[66] In short, "subject" and "object" mark a functional and fluid distinction present within our actual experience, not a final and fixed opposition transcending all possible experience.[67]

If the distinction between subject and object is understood in terms of an immutable and ultimate opposition, then we have the "problem" of the external world; however, if we interpret this distinction in a flexible and functional manner, then we have the problematic of the contemporary subject. The "problem" of the external world concerns how knowledge of the objective world is possible; the problematic of the contemporary subject concerns how the subjectivity of concrete persons is actualized. The former assumes a primordial gulf between subject and object and inquires into whether this gulf can be bridged; the latter presupposes a mutual determination of subject and object and investigates how concrete, historical subjects are constituted by their actual, historical circumstances. The former considers how the subject can possibly know the world; the latter examines how this world actually generates these subjects.

This conception of the subject is one of the ways in which Marx and Dewey undermined foundationalism. Recall that the concept of subject was introduced to displace that of individual. While the term "subject" designates a being constituted by its relationships, "individual" signifies a ready-made, self-sufficient being. To view a being as ready-made and self-sufficient is to conceive it as existing in isolation from others; such a being obviously is not constituted by its relationships to the things (both resisting objects and co-operative subjects) with which it interacts.

In fact, individuals come to recognize themselves as such only through interactions with others. According to Marx, humans are beings "which can individuate themselves only in the midst of society".[68] Dewey no less than Marx insisted that personal individuation is a social process: "To learn to be human is to develop through the give-and-take of communication an effective sense of being an individually distinctive member of a community."[69] In a different context, Dewey defined society as "the process of associating in such

ways that experiences, ideas, emotions, values are transmitted and made common".[70] There is a sense in which the individual person is subordinate to this associative process, since

> except in and through communication of experience from and to others, he remains dumb, merely sentient, a brute animal. Only in association with fellows does he become a conscious [*i.e.*, self-conscious] centre of experience.[71]

While the subject comes to acquire its identity in time and through its relations, the individual possesses this identity at the outset and apart from others; in other words, it is a ready-made and self-sufficient being. The individual so conceived was called upon to serve as a foundation. As Dewey remarked in *The Public and Its Problems*,

> Philosophic theories of knowledge made the same appeal to the self, or ego, in the form of personal consciousness identified with mind itself, that political theories made to the natural individual, as the court of ultimate resort.[72]

This natural individual denotes a being whose identity is fixed apart from its history; in contrast, human subjectivity refers to a reality whose very being is a process of becoming. Moreover, this process always occurs within a context; consequently, the distinctive characteristics of any human subject must always be traced to the historical context in which this subject forges its identity.

The subject is constituted by its relationships to those things with which he is in interaction. However, it is important to draw a distinction between *what* and *who* the subject is. What the subject is is constituted by its circumstances, by the network of relationships in which the subject is destined to pursue its purposes. Who the subject is is determined by how he responds to what he is. In these responses, human subjects reveal themselves to be self-creative agents. For example, a person is the child of immigrants; this constitutes in some measure what the person is. How he responds to this fact in terms of personal decisions and outward actions determines who he is. That he is the child of an immigrant is an ineradicable part of his personal history; it can be denied but not obliterated. The past is always to some extent and in some way operative in the present. What we are is a function of our history as this history exerts itself in our circumstances. Who we are is a function of our choices as these choices address themselves to our history. Thus, the identity of the subject is continuously emerging out of the intersection of circumstances and choices. If we draw the distinction between what and who the subject

is, then it is easy to see how the subject can be both a product of its past and a result of its own activity.

While this distinction is not explicit in the writings of either Marx or Dewey, it is at least not inconsistent with what they do in fact claim. It may even be implicit in the writings of these two thinkers. For example, in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Marx spoke of the way in which the abolition of private property made possible the appropriation of our human essence. We have inherited a task which is set by both dynamic human needs and evolving human institutions. These needs and institutions constitute what we are. However, it is necessary for us creatively and courageously to appropriate the task which these needs and institutions thrust upon us. In the appropriation of this task, we ourselves, not as isolated individuals but as communal beings, create who we are.

Yet the first step toward the creation of who we are is becoming conscious of what we are. This fact reveals the indispensability of critique, the work of bringing to explicit consciousness the objective facts of our actual existence. This critique proceeds not by establishing a perspective outside of our historical situation from which to judge this situation; it proceeds by revealing the principles operative within our actual circumstances. In Marx' own words,

> we shall confront the world not as doctrinaires with a new principle: 'Here is the truth, bow down before it!' We develop new principles to the world out of its own principles. We do not say to the world: 'Stop fighting; your struggle is of no account. We want to shout the true slogan at you'. We only show the world what it is fighting for, and consciousness is something that the world must acquire, like it or not.[73]

Frequently the "world" resists becoming aware of itself. "There is a social pathology which works powerfully against effective inquiry into social institutions and conditions."[74] This pathology manifests itself in countless ways; the desire for distractions, the intimidation of all dissenters, and the glorification of the *status quo* are among the more important ways in which effective inquiry into social conditions is blocked.[75]

It should be stressed that the acquisition of consciousness is only the first step in the creation of ourselves. The reform of consciousness should not be undertaken as an end in itself but rather as a means to the reform of institutions, the most important of which is the institution which enables us to perpetuate ourselves (*i.e.*, the system of production). [76] Production involves the appropriation of nature for the satisfaction of our needs. In this appropriation, both the natural world

and human producers are transformed. When this appropriation is alienated, human producers are estranged not only from one another but also from the natural world which is, in reality, their inorganic body.[77] The appropriation of our humanity, thus, means the humanization of nature. Hence, when Marx spoke of the task of appropriating our essence, he was referring to a concrete, practical activity, not an abstract, intellectual endeavor. I think I have said enough to suggest the plausibility of my claim that the distinction between what and who the subject is is implicit in Marx. Let me now attempt to establish the same point with respect to Dewey.

Dewey called "absurd" the view that experience is by its very nature owned by someone and that this ownership is such that everything about experience is affected by its being the private possession of some unique individual.[78] He argued that experience is intrinsically no less objective than a house.

> [A] house can be owned only when it has existence and properties independent of being owned. The quality of belonging to someone is not an all-absorbing maw in which independent properties and relations disappear to be digested into egohood. It is additive; it marks the assumption of a new relationship.[79]

So too with experience:

> Experience when it happens has the same dependence upon objective natural events, physical and social, as has the occurrence of a house. It has its own objective and definitive traits; these can be described without reference to self.[80]

Even so, there are occasions in which this reference is crucial. To claim ownership of experience - a claim that is always made in a specific context for a specific reason - is to "assume the care and administration of certain objects and acts in experience".[81] To make this claim is to take responsibility for the thoughts, beliefs, and desires which the course of our lives has inculcated in us.

> It does not mean that the self is the source or author of the thought or affection nor its exclusive seat. It signifies that the self as a centered organization of energies identifies itself (in the sense of accepting their consequences) with a belief or sentiment of independent and external origination.[82]

Human experience as a natural transaction - that is, as an objective process - determines what we originally think, believe, and desire.

However, out of this very process there emerges a self, a being who comes to claim ownership of what the course of life has more or less forced upon it. Of course, this being rejects as well as accepts various parts of its complex heritage. In fact, any human organism from the very outset is a selective agency; however, with the acquisition of language, the manner of selection is radically transformed. The subject actively selects - rather than passively reflects - among the alternatives presented by its situation.

For the subject to be, in one sense, constituted by its historical context and, in another sense, created by its own existential decisions would seem to preclude the possibility of attributing a "nature" to this subject. That is, the subject as subject is precisely that which is historically and existentially fashioned; thus, it would appear that it is in no way antecendently determined by an innate constitution. Accordingly, the recognition of the person as a subject would seem to entail denying that human beings possess a universal nature.[83]

However, neither Marx nor Dewey refrained from attributing such a nature to humans. Such attributions are found in reference to the most central concerns of these two thinkers. What could be more central to Marx' views than class struggle or to Dewey's than human experience? Yet it is precisely here that these two thinkers speak of human nature. According to Marx, the capitalist class and the working class represent one and the same human self-alienation.[84] However, capitalists feel satisfied and affirmed in their self-alienation; indeed, they experience alienation as a sign of their own power. In contrast, workers feel destroyed in their alienation. The workers constitute a class that "is, within depravity, an indignation against this depravity".[85] This indignation is "necessarily aroused in this class by the contradiction between its human nature and its life-situation, which is a blatant, outright, and all-embracing denial of that very nature".[86]

Dewey, in the "Foreword" to *Human Nature and Conduct,* wrote:

> there are always intrinsic forces of a common human nature at work; forces which are sometimes stifled by the encompassing social medium but which also in the long course of history are always striving to liberate themselves and to make over social institutions so that the latter may form a freer, more transparent and more congenial medium for their operation.[87]

That is, in the transaction between the human organism and its environing conditions (this transaction constituting experience in Dewey's sense), human nature is a continuous force. It is the factor which in one way or another is always interacting with the environment in the production of culture.[88]

Do these claims mean that Marx and Dewey did not consistently follow out the implications of their characterization of person-as-subject? Or does it suggest that there is a way of reconciling the historicity of the human subject and the universality of human nature?

In *History as System* José Ortega y Gasset argues against the possibility of such a reconciliation. According to him, "Man is what has happened to him, what he has done ... Man is a substantial emigrant on a pilgrimage of being."[89] Are there, then, no limits to what man can make of himself? In this initial illimitableness of possibilities that characterizes one who has no nature there stands out ... only one limit: the past. The experiments already made with life narrow man's future."[90] We always live in view of the past. In short, humans have no nature, only a history.[91]

Yet even Ortega recognizes that human beings, precisely because they are living beings, possess needs.[92] It is first and foremost in reference to needs that both Marx and Dewey attribute a universal nature to human beings. Here, then, is the center of the controversy. For Ortega, to define any need or set of needs as essential to humans would involve a limitation of freedom; however, for Marx and Dewey, the shared needs of human agents are not limiting factors but necessary conditions for effective freedom.

As we have noted, what we are is a function of our history, whereas who we are is a function of our actions, our responses to this history. However it is imperative to conceive this history in the broadest possible terms; it includes not only our personal but also our cultural past; in addition, it encompasses our biological heritage. While inherited institutions insure the effective presence of our cultural past, innate needs guarantee the effective presence of our biological past. (Memories and to a far greater extent habits, ranging from very specific skills to extremely general orientations, do the same for our personal past.) Thus, while Ortega's position presupposes a dualism between nature and history, Marx and Dewey overcome this dualism; for both of them, human history is an episode within natural history, just as a personal history is a moment within a larger social drama. If human history is continuous with natural history, then we can say with Ortega that the only limit to human self-creation is the past; yet we must take this past in a far more inclusive sense than he understood. In particular, we must take this past to include our biological as well as our cultural inheritance. As I noted above, the effective presence of this biological past is insured by the innate needs of the human organism; these needs are "the inherent demands that men make because of their constitution".[93]

According to Marx, the human person (as we have seen)

> is directly a natural being. As a natural being and as a living natural being he is ... furnished with natural powers of life - he is an active natural being. These forces exist in him as tendencies and abilities - as impulses.
>
> But man is not merely a natural being: he is a human natural being. That is to say, he is a being for himself. Therefore he is a species being.

Human nature is a complex of needs; these needs are of two sorts, natural and species (what we might call species-specific).[94] Our natural needs are ones we share with at least some of the other animals; our species needs are those which are unique to our species. Two characteristics of both sorts of needs are the following. First, these needs are immanent drives; second, they have external objects. The first of these characteristics shows the human organism to be an inherently active being. The second shows this organism to be an essentially incomplete being who, precisely because of its incompleteness, is thrust beyond itself:

> the objects of his impulses exist outside him, as objects independent of him; yet these objects are objects of his need - essential objects, indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers.[95]

The fundamental need of humans as species beings is to produce in a self-conscious and self-directed way. It is this that distinguishes humans from other animals:

> Man makes his life-activity the object of his will and of his consciousness ... . Conscious life-activity directly distinguishes human from animal life-activity. It is just because of this that he is a species being.[96]

However, in asserting that the basic need of a human being is self-conscious and self-directed production, Marx is not claiming this need can be satisfied by the individual as such; indeed, it is only as a subject, a being in community with others, that this need can be fulfilled. It is no more possible for the individual as such to be the source of production than it is for such a being to be the creator of language.[97] Production is as essentially social as language. This does not preclude the possibility of subjects being creative; it simply underscores the fact that creativity always occurs within the context of community.

Dewey's distinction between the psycho-physical and the participatory levels of natural transactions appears to correspond closely to Marx' distinction between the natural and the species needs of human beings. Dewey distinguished, in fact, three levels of natural transactions: The first level is that of physical transactions, the second that of psycho-physical transactions, and the third that of mind or "association, communication, participation". [98]

> Empirically speaking, the most obvious difference between living and non-living things [*i.e.*, between psycho-physical and physical transactions] is that the activities of the former are characterized by needs, by efforts which are active demands to satisfy needs, and by satisfactions.[99]

Thus employed, "psycho-physical" denotes the conjunctive presence in activity of need-demand-satisfaction.[100] In this sense, the term "does not denote an abrogation of the physico-chemical ... [rather] it denotes the possession of certain qualities and efficacies not displayed by the inanimate".[101]

While "psycho-physical" denotes the conjunctive presence in activity of need-demand-satisfaction, the "mental" denotes the transformative presence in activity of language.

> As life is a character of events in a peculiar condition of organization, and 'feeling' is a quality of life-forms marked by complexly mobile and discriminating responses, so 'mind' is an added property assumed by a feeling creature, when it reaches that organized interaction with other living creatures which is language, communication.[102]

In short, human beings are biological organisms with the power of social discourse.[103] Language

> is a fact of such distinction that its occurrence changed dumb creatures - as we so significantly call them - into thinking and knowing animals and created the realm of meanings.[104]

The importance of language cannot be exaggerated; according to Dewey, the

> invention or discovery of symbols is doubtless by far the single greatest event in the history of man. Without them, no intellectual advance is possible; with them, there is no limit set to intellectual

development except inherent stupidity.[105]

Human life is characterized by psycho-physical transactions, transactions between the human organism and its environing conditions that are distinguished by the conjunctive presence of need-demand-satisfaction. This appears to correspond to what Marx calls the natural needs of human beings. Over and above psycho-physical transactions, human life is marked by transactions involving language. "The heart of language is not 'expression' of something antecedent, much less expression of antecedent thought. It is communication."[106] And by communication Dewey means "the establishment of co-operation in an activity in which there are partners, and in which the activity of each is modified and regulated by partnership".[107] So understood, communication is the enactment and possibly even the enhancement of community. And by community he means

> an order of energies transmuted into one of meanings which are appreciated and mutually referred by each to every other on the part of those engaged in combined action.[108]

Transactions involving communication and, thus, community appear to correspond closely to what Marx means by the species life of human beings.

Dewey's conception of community profoundly alters our understanding of freedom. Freedom or liberty is not to be thought of as independence of social ties; such a conception can only lead to anarchy and dissolution.[109] Rather liberty

> is that secure release and fulfillment of personal potentialities which take place only in rich and manifold association with others: the power to be an individualized self making a distinctive contribution and enjoying in its own way the fruits of association.[110]

The fulfillment of these potentialities depends upon the imagination, in particular, the imagination as it has been transformed through the use of symbols. As Dewey notes in *Art as Experience*, "[i]magination is the chief instrument of the good".[111] However, both memory and imagination in their distinctively human forms depend upon symbols; for it is only with the use of symbols that recollection and foresight can be sustained indefinitely.[112] Symbols allow us to call to mind the absent, that which is no longer or that which is not yet. In addition, by means of symbols "we act without acting".[113] That is,

> we perform experiments by means of symbols which have results

> which are themselves only symbolized, and which do not commit us to actual or existential consequences.[114]

In short, we conduct experiments in the imagination.

It is significant that Marx also takes this power of imagination, a power that enables us to overturn the tyranny of the actual, to be a distinctive feature of human agency. Thus, in *Capital* he wrote:

> We [in this study] presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame an architect in the construction of her cells.[115]

However, what distinguishes the most inept architect from the most efficient animal is that "the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality".[116] This enables humans to create not merely in response to immediately felt needs, but also in accordance with ideally imagined forms. In other words, human producers, precisely because of their symbolic imagination, are able to "form things in accordance with the laws of beauty".[117]

Imagination belongs to the subject, not the individual. That is, it is a historically conditioned function, not an originally complete capacity. The same is true for thought, which for both Marx and Dewey is essentially the internalization of language. As Dewey remarks,

> soliloquy is the product and reflex of converse with others; social communication [is] not an effect of soliloquy. If we had not talked to others and they with us, we should never talk to and with ourselves.[118]

In turn, Marx speaks of language as "the element of thought itself - the element of thought's living expression".[119]

> Not only is the material of my activity given to me as a social product (as is even the language in which the thinker is active): my own existence is social activity, and therefore, that which I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness of myself as a social being.[120]

What the subject is depends upon history, what he has inherited from nature and society as well as what he has lived through. Who he is depends on, in the first instance, becoming aware of this inheritance. Language plays an especially important role in all of this, since it is both part of the subject's inheritance and also the means whereby the subject

becomes conscious and even critical of its inheritance.

I have stressed the importance of distinguishing between what and who the subject is. It is time to introduce another important distinction. For both Marx and Dewey, subjects are transactors; they are beings constituted by their continuous transactions with the natural world and their social environment. While Marx took praxis or perhaps appropriation to be the most fundamental as well as most inclusive relationship between humans and the world, Dewey saw experience as the most basic and encompassing relationship. However, regarding either of these transactions, praxis or experience, it is important to distinguish between *what* and *how*. Indeed, both Marx and Dewey are quite explicit on this very point. According to Marx, humans are the subjects of production.

> What they are ... coincides with their production, both with what they produce and how they produce. The nature of individuals [or, more accurately, subjects] thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.[121]

According to Dewey,

> experience includes what men do and suffer, what they strive for, love, believe and endure, and also how men act and are acted upon, the ways in which they do and suffer, desire and enjoy, see, believe, imagine - in short, processes of experiencing.[122]

In his general theory of human judgment, Justus Buchler has offered what he calls "a metaphysics of the human process. Its concepts aim to discern the broadest and deepest aspects of human functioning."[123] In Marx' theory of praxis (the activity whereby humans appropriate nature for the satisfaction of their needs) and in Dewey's theory of experience (the transaction between the organism and the environment), we encounter nothing less than a naturalistic metaphysics of the human process. Whether these theories have discerned the broadest and deepest aspects of human functioning cannot be determined here; what can be said is that these accounts are both illuminating and liberating: they illuminate the essentially relational and historical character of the human subject and, thereby, liberate us from the conception of the individual as self-enclosed and ready-made.

What we are depends on our history taken in the widest possible sense; who we are depends on the appropriation of that history understood in the deepest existentialist sense. In the words of Marx, "Man appropriates his total essence in a total manner, that is to say, as a whole man."[124] However, the only way in which he can appropriate

this essence in this manner is through an appropriation of the totality of his past. Of course, we can only recover a small fraction of the actual details of human history; nonetheless, we can uncover the drama within this history, the struggle of countless generations for the realization of a humane world.[125] It is in revealing this drama that we appropriate the totality of our past. The task of appropriating our essence - that is, of becoming human - requires discerning the drama within history; in turn, this requires discerning how history is in the making and participating in the making of this history. Hence, this appropriation can never be an uncritical acceptance of past events; it must always be a radical critique of our present historical circumstances.[126] Here we have the contextualism of Marx and Dewey in its most basic and also most liberating form.

NOTES

1. Lloyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (eds.), *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society,* Garden City, New Jersey, Anchor Books, 1976, p. 122. Hereafter cited as *WYM*. Cf. Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 135.

2. John Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, Gloucester, Mass., Peter Smith, 1968, p. 7. Hereafter cited as *PC*.

3. Dewey, *PC*, p. 3.

4. Marx, *WYM*,pp. 122-3; Dewey, *PC*, p. 4.

5. John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, New York, Capricorn, 1960, Ch. II. Hereafter *QC*.

6. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1972, p. 26. Hereafter *RP*.

7. Robert Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1978, p. 54. Hereafter *MER*. John Dewey, *Philosophy of Education*, Totowa, New Jersey, Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1971, p. 20. Hereafter *PE*.

8. Tucker, *MER*, p. 145.

9. Richard J. Bernstein (ed.), *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, Indianapolis, Indiana, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1960, pp. 66-7. Hereafter *ENF*.

10. John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, New York, Modern Library, 1957, p. 289. Hereafter *HNC*.

11. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, New York, Dover, 1958, p. 37. Hereafter *EN*.

12. Dewey, *EN*, p. 37; cf. p. 398 and p. 407.

13. Dewey, *EN*, p. 37; Tucker, *MER*, p. 12.

14. Dewey, *QC*, p. 255.

15. Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, pp. 134ff.

16. Wiliam Gavin, 'Dewey, Marx and James' Will to Believe', *Studies in Soviet Thought* 28 (July 1984), pp. 15-29.

17. Dewey, *EN*, p. 71; p. 275.

18. John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1965, p. 13; cf. p. 15. Hereafter *IDP*.

19. John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, New York, Capricorn, 1963, Ch. 4. Hereafter *FC*. Cf. Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, New York, Capricorn, 1963, p. 80; and Dewey, *The*

Public and Its Problems, Chicago, Sage Books, 1954, pp. 195-202. Hereafter *LSA* and *PP*, respectively.

20. Jim Cork, 'John Dewey and Karl Marx', in *John Dewey: Philosopher of Science and Freedom*, New York, Dial Press, 1950, p. 349.

21. Tucker, *MER*, p. 498.

22. However, there is at least one place in which Dewey himself allowed for the use of force within the context of democracy: *LSA*, p. 87.

23. Cf. Charles Frankl, 'John Dewey's Social Philosophy', *New Studies in the Philosophy of John Dewey*, Hanover, New Hampshire, University Press of New England, 1977, p. 42.

24. Tucker, *MER*, p. 13.

25. Tucker, *MER*, p. 13.

26. John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, New York, Capricorn, 1962, p. 148. Hereafter *ION*. Cf. Dewey, *PP*, p. 148.

27. Dewey, *RP*, p. 122.

28. Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 126.

29. *Loc. cit.*

30. Paul Connerton, *"Introduction" to Critical Sociology*, New York, Penguin, 1976, p. 19.

31. *Loc. cit.*

32. Dewey, *PP*, p. 103.

33. *Loc. cit.*

34. *Loc. cit.*

35. Silverman, *op. cit.* p. 126.

36. Tucker, *MER*, p. 116.

37. Dewey, *EN*, pp. 238-9.

38. Dewey, *PE*, p. 15; Dewey, *ENF*, p. 43.

39. Dewey, *EN*, pp. 241-2.

40. Dewey, *EN*, p. 244.

41. Dewey, *EN*, p. 242.

42. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, New York, Vintage Books, 1973, p. 83.

43. *Loc. cit.*; cf. Dewey, *RP*, p. 50; Dewey, *PP*, p. 102; p. 195.

44. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 84.

45. *Loc. cit.*

46. Dewey, *PP*, p. 191.

47. *Loc. cit.*

48. Dewey, *PP*, p. 22.

49. Dewey, *EN*, p. 243.

50. *Loc. cit.*

51. Dewey, *EN*, pp. 243-4.
52. Dewey, *PP*, 23.
53. *Loc. cit.*
54. Dewey, *RP*, p. 194.
55. Dewey, *RP*, p. 196; cf. *LSA*, pp. 61ff.
56. Tucker, *MER*, p. 115.
57. Dewey, *EN*, p. 239.
58. *Loc. cit.*
59. *Loc. cit.*
60. Dewey, *ENF*, pp. 42-3.
61. Dewey, *ENF*, p. 45.
62. *Loc. cit.*
63. Dewey, *ENF*, p. 25.
64. Dewey, *ENF*, p. 27.
65. Dewey, *ENF*, p. 36.
66. Dewey, *EN*, pp. 239-240.
67. George Santayana has written: "In Dewey ... there is a pervasive quasi-Hegelian tendency to dissolve the individual into his social functions, as well as everything substantial or actual into something relative or transitional. For him events, situations, histories hold all facts and all persons in solution." ('Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics', in *Dewey and His Critics*, Lancaster, PA, Lancaster Press, 1977, edited by Sidney Morgenbesser, p. 345.)
68. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 84
69. Dewey, *PP*, p. 154.
70. Dewey, *RP*, p. 207.
71. *Loc. cit.*
72. Dewey, *PP*, p. 88, (emphasis added); cf. p. 102.
73. Tucker, *MER*, pp. 14-15.
74. Dewey, *PP*, 170.
75. *Loc. cit.*
76. Cf. Dewey, *HNC*, p. 280; and *LSA*, pp. 88-89.
77. Tucker, *MER*, p. 75.
78. Dewey, *EN*, p. 231.
79. Dewey, *EN*, p. 232.
80. *Loc. cit.*
81. Dewey, *EN*, p. 233.
82. *Loc. cit.*
83. Three recent contributions to the significant body of literature on this topic are: Fan Gongcai, 'Marx on the Return of Man to Himself', in *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, volume 16, Winter 83/84, pp. 83-98; Li Lianke, The Essential Determinative of Man and Historical Materialism', in *ibid.*, volume 15, Summer 1984, pp. 99-115; and Thomas E. Waratenberg, '"Species-Being" and "Human

Nature" in Marx', in *Human Studies*, volume 5, April/June 1982, pp. 77- 95.

84. Tucker, *MER*, p. 133.
85. Tucker, *MER*, p. 133-4.
86. Tucker, *MER*, p. 134.
87. Dewey, *HNC*, p. viii.
88. Dewey, *FC*, p. 17.
89. José Ortega y Gasset, *History as System*, New York, Norton & Co., 1961, pp. 216-217.
90. *Ibid.* p. 217.
91. *Loc. cit.*
92. *Ibid.* p. 201.
93. Dewey, *PE*, p. 184; cf. Dewey, *HNC*, pp. 101-117.
94. Cf. Bertell Ollman, *Alienation*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1975, Chapters 7, 8, and 9.
95. Tucker, *MER*, p. 115.
96. Tucker, *MER*, p. 76.
97. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 84.
98. Dewey, *EN*, p. 272; cf. p. 261.
99. Dewey, *EN*, p. 252.
100. Dewey, *EN*, p. 254.
101. Dewey, *EN*, p. 255.
102. Dewey, *EN*, p. 258.
103. Dewey, *EN*, p. 282.
104. Dewey, *EN*, p. 168.
105. Dewey, *QC*, p. 151; cf. Dewey, *LSA*, p. 71.
106. Dewey, *EN*, 179.
107. *Loc. cit.*
108. Dewey, *EN*, p. 153; cf. pp. 198-199.
109. Dewey, *PP*, p. 150.
110. *Loc. cit.*
111. John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, New York, Capricorn, 1958, p. 348.
112. Dewey, *QC*, p. 151.
113. *Loc. cit.*; cf. Dewey, *RP*, p. 1; p. 103.
114. *Loc. cit.*; cf. Dewey, *EN*, p. 291 and Dewey, *HNC*, p. 179.
115. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Moscow, 1954, p. 177.
116. *Loc. cit.*
117. Tucker, *MER*, p. 76.
118. Dewey, *EN*, p. 170.
119. Tucker, *MER*, p. 91.
120. Tucker, *MER*, p. 86.
121. Tucker, *MER*, p. 150.

122. Dewey, *EN*, p. 8.

123. Justus Buchler, *Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment*, New York, Dover, 1979, p. vii.

124. Tucker, *MER*, p. 87.

125. Hegel, *Logic*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 261; Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, New York, Dover, 1956, pp. 63ff.

126. Tucker, *MER*, p. 60; Dewey, *LSA*, p. 62.

WILLIAM L. MCBRIDE

Science, Psychology, and Human Values in the Context of Dewey's Critique of Marx

This paper began as a piece of historical research concerning some of the principal themes of Dewey's critique of Marx. I thought that it would be interesting, since Dewey viewed the world so much in evolutionary terms, to pick out several such critical references over a long span of time. The period that I chose, after reconsidering the chronology of Dewey's writings, was roughly four decades, beginning in 1898 and ending in 1939; five texts, published at intervals of approximately a decade, presented themselves as especially useful for my purposes. Accordingly, I shall devote the first half of this paper to reproducing what I take to be some of the main points of these Deweyan allusions to Marx and Marxism.

As was to be hoped and expected, however, the passages in question proved to have a philosophical interest as well as that of an historical narrative. (I presume that I may still be allowed to make such a distinction at least provisionally, despite the tendency of certain extreme versions of anti-foundationalism to reduce the former type of interest to a form of the latter!) The gist of the philosophical point may readily, even if somewhat anachronistically, be stated in terms of the central theme of the present volume: whereas Marx, at least as I and many of our contemporaries interpret him, was at least as anti-foundationalist as Dewey and the other Immortals in Richard Rorty's currently-fashionable pantheon[1] - perhaps more so than Dewey, as I shall note, on the question of a fundamental human nature. Dewey (1859-1952) was in agreement with Lenin (1870-1924) and many of their mutual contemporaries, Marxist and anti-Marxist alike, in seeing Marx as a foundationalist. And some of Dewey's most serious criticisms of Marx are based, I shall claim, on this type of misconception.

I. FIVE REFERENCES

1. In his 1898 *Lectures on Psychological and Political Ethics*, Dewey includes a critique of economic theories, showing an awareness of the centrality of economics for political ethics that was to become uncommon by the middle of our own century and has been resurrected among philosophers in our culture, as I see it, only in very recent times. In the course of pointing out the importance, for economic theory, of ascertaining a standard of value, Dewey says that one answer to the

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question as to what might constitute such a standard is labor, and that Karl Marx "endeavored to give a sort of quasi-mathematical statement of so many units of labor operating for so much time, establishing such and such value".[2] But the problem, Dewey adds, is that it is obvious that not all quantitatively equal expenditures of labor produce equally valuable outcomes. He says that Marx tries to overcome that difficulty by inserting the qualifier, "socially available" labor. But this, says Dewey, begs the whole question. On the other hand, it suggests a genuinely important point for which an apparently past-oriented standard such as that first proposed by Marx fails to account, namely, that the future need for such-and-such an item bears centrally on its value. Indeed, says Dewey, "all such socialistic plans for getting a set scheme of values and of rewards" have the disadvantage of being backward-looking, based on the past.

Now, I need hardly point out that scholarly problems abound here, as in all of Dewey's references to Marx. First, there is a central problem in Dewey's own transcribed notes, a problem noted at the foot of the page but then further compounded by the editor. For Marx does not use the expression, "socially available", as a technical term for whatever labor time is to count towards the determination of value; rather, what Dewey undoubtedly has in mind is the familiar Marxian expression, "socially necessary" labor time and not, as Professor Koch most unhelpfully claims, "socially useful".[3] That Dewey *meant* "socially necessary" here seems to be obvious on the basis of his reference to the importance of there being an "active *need* for the thing somewhere" (italics mine), in the very next paragraph.[4] But the larger problem with Dewey's interpretative allusion to Marx' theory here, a problem to which I shall be returning later, is that in identifying the essence of Marx' theory of value and finding an apparent basic flaw in it, about which I shall not comment, Dewey fails to note that Marx at most intended the labor theory to account for the role of value as exchange value within a capitalist economic system, rather than for the role of value in all possible systems. Hence, Dewey's final criticism of "all socialistic plans" in this lecture is grossly distortive of Marx' basic expectation concerning the labor theory of value, which was that it would no longer obtain in a possible future socialist society, in which, as Marx foresaw it, *use* values would predominate. This misunderstanding on Dewey's part is but the first of several indications that Dewey regarded Marx as offering a trans-temporal, if not transcendental or foundational, sort of theory.

2. My 1908 reference is of value only in showing Dewey's continuing awareness of and interest in Marxian ideas. His famous text, *Ethics*, jointly written with James Tufts, was first published in that year. Its chapters dealing primarily with economics, XXII through XXVI, were actually written by Tufts, though of course the ideas have

Dewey's concurrence, and Marx is not mentioned by name in the text proper. But the bibliography to Chapter XXII begins by mentioning Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and Marx together as the three great classical writers on "the relation of the economic to the whole social order during the past century"[5], and Marx is mentioned again, along with a specific reference to his and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, in the bibliography at the end of Chapter XXIV[6], in which individualism has been subjected to a sustained critique. It is also worth noting that the 1936 revised edition of this book, for which the final chapters were thoroughly rewritten, contains a mention of Marx as having been the inspiration for the Russian social experiment, under the rubric, 'Radical Alternatives to Capitalism'.[7] In this reference, both the *Communist Manifesto* and *Capital* are mentioned, and the three foundations of Marxism are said to be "the materialistic - or, better, the economic - interpretation of history", class struggle, and the doctrine of surplus value. The chapter in which this now much more extensive reference appears ends with a call for a change of perspective in which the economic would no longer be such a dominant factor in life.

3. By 1919, socialism in general and Marxist socialism in particular had of course come much more to the fore in the American social consciousness than had apparently been the case in 1908. Dewey was becoming increasingly preoccupied with actual political developments all over the world, and an essay that he wrote about 'Liberalism in Japan' in that year shows in an interesting way both how closely this preoccupation was connected with thoughts about socialism and how much he continued to resist what he perceived to be fundamental elements in the Marxist variant of it. The specific object of his criticism here is what he sees as the *millennialism* characteristic of Marxism - in other words, the foundationalist belief in historical inevitability - along with the extreme paradox implied in the apparent entertainment of such belief on the part of individuals who are now carrying the day, in various parts of the world, by virtue of their political and intellectual prowess rather than of any inevitable causal mechanisms. As Dewey expresses it: "People love to stand on their heads intellectually, and so it is that the Marxians, who have given the world its best modern demonstration of the power of ideas and of intellectual leadership, are the ones who most deny that these things have any efficacy."[8] Yet he himself observes, five pages later, that the Marxian division into polarized class extremes, which he labels the proletarian and the millionaire, is occurring in the Japan of the time.

To me, this latter reference indicates a certain ambivalence on Dewey's part concerning the notion of historical inevitability as he perceives it to loom behind all the central insights of Marxism. He does not believe in it, of course, but could it perhaps be somehow true, or at least partially true, after all? In a reference to Marxism in an essay

written a year later, 'How Reaction Helps', Dewey returns to his more accustomed attitude of disbelief concerning historical inevitability, when he expresses pleasure at the thought that socialism has now rid itself of "the Marxian doctrine of a sudden revolution which was to be the result of the universal misery, poverty and weakness of the laborer".[9]

4. Dewey's famous report of *Impressions of Soviet Russia*[10] dates from 1928, three decades after his political ethics lectures, and might well be considered an important landmark in Dewey's critique of Marxism. But basic problems with which Dewey himself was already familiar, problems as to just how faithful the Soviet experiment was to the ideas of Marx himself, make me feel that it would be more appropriate to turn to a more philosophically oriented work, *Individualism Old and New*, which first appeared in 1929, as my selection from the next decade. In the reference from this work that I have chosen, Dewey begins by correcting what he sees as a popular myth about socialism according to which socialism would be opposed to industrial consolidation and concentration of resources and in favor of redistributing wealth on an equal basis to each person - in short, socialism as just another, rather extreme, version of individualism. In fact, says Dewey, Marx prophesied just the sort of consolidation that is now taking place. But he then goes on to say that, "In these predictions ... Marx reasoned too much from psychological economic premises and depended too little upon technological causes ... He had no conception, moreover, of the capacity of expanding industry to develop new inventions so as to develop new wants, new forms of wealth, new occupations ..."[11] Moreover, Dewey maintains, Marx failed to foresee the possibility that employers might adjust to the need to promote consumption by raising workers' wages, and so his expectation of a proletarian revolution has not been fulfilled. Nevertheless, Dewey concludes, Marx is to be praised for seeing that the central issue of the day is "the relation of the economic structure to political operations".

With this last remark, I would like to point out, Dewey returns to the perspective on Marx from which he made the first reference that I have culled, the reference in the 1898 lectures: Marx has something to say, above all about political ethics. But I should also note another point to which I shall return shortly, namely, that, just as in the case of his allusion to the question of value in 1898, so now here in 1929 Dewey has gotten Marx wrong on a basic issue, the issue of the role of technological development in Marx' thought, which Dewey claims to have been negligible. Instead, Dewey here attributes to Marx another type of foundationalist perspective, one of "psychological economic premises".

5. Finally, *Freedom and Culture*, published in 1939, is the *locus classicus* of the Deweyan critique of Marxism. It is this work that Jim Cork, who was so eager to effect a *rapprochement* between the two

traditions (an idea which, he claims, originated in Sidney Hook's 1939 book, *John Dewey*), regards as the major obstacle to such a *rapprochement* from the Deweyan side.[12] In this work, according to Cork, Dewey "betrays his own lack of first-hand knowledge of Marx' writings".[13] In *Freedom and Culture*, Dewey refers to Marxism virtually *passim*, but particularly in his Chapter Four, polemically entitled 'Totalitarian Economics and Democracy'. Let me cite just a few of the criticisms that Dewey alleges here. While he says that "There is no need to go into the full scope of Marxist philosophy upon its theoretical side"[14], he takes special umbrage at Marxism's claim to be scientific and to have found, in Dewey's version of Marxism, "*one* causal law"[15] by which all events are said to be "linked together into a *single* whole". He attributes to Marxism a conception of the economic as absolutely dominant[16] - the view that, it will be recalled, he and Tufts called for overcoming in their *Ethics* - and he characterizes Marxism as propounding a belief in *strife* as the sole agent of social change.[17] The sentence which most strikingly drives home Dewey's sweepingly negative indictment of Marxism in this work reads as follows: "In the name of science, a thoroughly anti-scientific procedure was formulated, in accord with which a generalization is made having the nature of ultimate 'truth,' and hence holding good at all times and places."[18] This, it is probably superfluous for me to point out, is practically a model characterization of a certain sort of extreme foundationalism, allegedly based on observation but in fact not really so, as it might be formulated in a rabidly anti-foundationalist polemic.

Later in the same chapter, rather anti-climactically, Dewey levels another charge against Marxism that I regard as worth repeating, namely, that it "throws out psychological as well as moral considerations".[19] Take, for instance, says Dewey, the phenomenon of class *consciousness*, which is "an imperatively required condition in the Marxist theory ... The formation of a class, especially of class-consciousness, depends upon the operation of psychological factors which are not mentioned - and which the theory rules out."[20] May I simply remark, without elaboration at this point, that this charge appears on the surface to be in flagrant contradiction to the one I cited from *Individualism Old and New*, in which Marx is said by Dewey to have "reasoned too much from psychological economic premises"?

In short, what this brief survey of moments from four decades of Dewey's writings indicates is a continuing interest in Marx on his part, a continuing skepticism about Marxian theory combined with the attitude that Marxism is on to some very important things for which individualism cannot account, and finally a great disillusionment with what Dewey perceived as the outcome of the Marxist message, a disillusionment unquestionably reinforced by the world events of the 1930s and Dewey's first-hand involvement therein. Whatever may be

said about the relative closeness of Dewey to Marx with respect to the notions of *praxis* and context and other important philosophical perspectives on the world, the actual record is one of strong criticism, and the single principal thrust of that criticism is that Marxism is a foundationalist theory. So much for the historical record; now let me turn to my own critical comments on the Deweyan critique of Marx and Marxism, which I have decided to offer under the three headings of science, psychology, and human values.

II. CRITICAL COMMENTS

A. Science

In *Freedom and Culture*, it will be recalled, Dewey went so far as to charge Marxism with having introduced "a thoroughly anti-scientific procedure" in the name of science - as damning an indictment as Dewey could possibly have mustered. The version of Marxism that is the object of Dewey's ire here is committed to the notion of a single, generalized, absolute truth - an alleged truth having to do with a univocal conception of historical causality that is based, presumably, on the salient material elements in the forces of production. Elsewhere, as we have seen, Dewey inveighs against notions of strong historical necessity that he attributes to Marxism and finds paradoxical in light of the tactical skills of some Marxist leaders in determining the course of contemporary history. Now, if this is indeed what Marxism holds, then Dewey is fully justified in this aspect of his criticism of it. And indeed something very close to this notion of univocal causality and especially of absolute truth is to be found in one of the works that most shaped the supposedly orthodox Marxism of Dewey's day - and even still of our own day in the Soviet Union, for that matter - namely, Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.[21] Lenin's position, as a believer both in strong historical necessity and in the value of developing a cadre of skilled professional revolutionary tacticians, *was* just as paradoxical as Dewey claimed such a position to be, while not mentioning Lenin by name. In fact, the only reasonably plausible resolution of it, as I see it, is to place even more stress on the foundationalist concept of an absolute objective (social) truth that is knowable at a given time[22], and then to assert, as Lenin did, that only trained professional revolutionaries have the mental capacities and time needed to discern that truth clearly and thoroughly.

But such a conception of absolute objective social truth is indeed anti-scientific in terms of any defensible modern view of science, despite Louis Althusser's sophisticated efforts a decade or so ago to resurrect it. Nor is it really the model of science that was held, I would

claim, by Marx himself - not even in *Capital*, where at times he comes closer to it than in any of his other writings. The subtleties of Marx' procedure that have been lost in the Leninist version of science which Dewey has criticized as the genuinely Marxist one are at least threefold: first, the important distinction that Marx makes in the Preface to the Second German Edition of *Capital* between the method of inquiry, which he has not recorded, and the method of presentation, the outcome of which is what we read on the printed pages of that book; second, the equally or even more important duality that plays itself out throughout *Capital* between the two "spheres", as Marx denominates them, of circulation and of production - the former on the surface of everyday commercial life, the second lying beneath that surface and ultimately explaining its operations; and third, the dialectical methodology itself, whereby both theories and the subject-matters with which they are concerned are seen to generate internal contradictions which then produce genuinely, sometimes radically, new moments by means of their interactions. All of this is basic to Marx', even if not always orthodox Marxism's, conception of science; and none of it is mentioned in the Deweyan criticisms of Marxist science that I have cited. On the other hand, I have the feeling that none of these three elements of Marx' scientific methodology - the distinction between the method of inquiry and the method of presentation, the dichotomy between two spheres of economic reality, and the rather Hegelian version of dialectic that I have identified and that I think still dominates, in however modified a form, the philosophical framework of *Capital* - is really very easily made compatible with Dewey's own approach to scientific inquiry, either, though of course together they come much closer to Dewey's views than does the supposedly Marxist but in fact extremely foundationalist conception of science that he has excoriated.

B. Psychology

I have already pointed out the apparent contradiction, not necessarily of a dialectical sort, between Dewey's complaining in 1929 that Marx "reasoned too much from psychological and economic premises and depended too little upon technological causes" and his alleging in 1939 that "Marxism throws out psychological as well as moral considerations". I shall not concern myself here directly with the claim concerning morality, which is very complex and in any case was simply mentioned in passing by Dewey in the passage I have cited, nor shall I say much more about Dewey's 1929 view of Marx as having little or no regard for the historical role of technology, which is plainly and simply wrong, without significant qualification. But I think it important to try to sort out, a little bit, what Dewey has to say about the role of psycho-

logy in Marxist thought. First of all, it should be noted that Dewey in his earlier critique speaks of "psychological economic premises", not just psychological premises as such. He sees Marx as having conflated the two disciplines that are more usually kept separate; and in seeing this Dewey is correct. In fact, Dewey himself, in a spirit of what might today be called contextualism, tended to do the same; in seeing similarities here, I can do no better than to cite Sidney Hook, as follows: "Like John Dewey, Karl Marx seemed to believe that human behavior [and I presume that this includes economic behavior] required for its proper study the biological and social psychological approach..."[23] Then, in his later critique, Dewey points out, again I believe correctly even though there is still a large body of Marxist scholarship against this position as there was already, as he mentions, in the '30s, that Marx' doctrine does *not* rely on an appeal to the simple-minded, foundationalist notion of self-interest which predominates among bourgeois economists and economic theorists. What Dewey then goes on to say - and it is in this passage that the remark about Marx' having thrown out psychological considerations appears - is that Marx rejects the notion of an independent biological human nature and sees every aspect of human behavior as shaped by outside, economic forces. Hence, according to Dewey, Marx has no psychology - at least, no explicit psychology. In fact, Dewey goes on to say, there is an *implicit* psychology in Marx' thought, taken over from the "optimistic psychology of laissez-faire liberalism" of his day and then stood on its head[24], which relies on certain social valuational judgments.

All in all, there is much to commend in Dewey's brief analysis of the role of psychology in Marx here. It is certainly the case that Marx neglected psychological considerations in his writings, so that the development of class consciousness, though not so incompatible with other aspects of his thought as Dewey believed, once one realizes that the "hard-determinist" conception of historical causality that Dewey again attributes to Marx in this passage is not Marx' own, is nevertheless left somewhat mysterious and unexplained in these writings. Dewey also sees, although he never quite states it as baldly as this, that Marx' conception of human nature is rather more flexible than his own, even though Dewey's is relatively flexible. Now, there are passages in *Capital* and elsewhere in which biological human nature plays an explicit role for Marx - for instance, in setting limits to the working day - but it is true that, precisely because of the vast transformative possibilities of technology which Dewey wrongly thought Marx to have overlooked, Marx tends to minimize the limitations which this biological human nature, including its more strictly psychological aspects, imposes on our race. Still, when all is said and done and despite Marx' own neglect of this area in the interest of concentrating, in his later career, on economic analysis, I believe that a very rich psychology can

be generated out of Marx' thought. And it would - here one final aspect of Dewey's criticism is very much on target - certainly involve value judgments.

C. Human Values

It is on this final point, which takes us back to the 1898 lectures, that Dewey and Marx are, in my judgment, really closest of the three topics that I have chosen to discuss. To recapitulate, Dewey's criticism of Marxist *science* was valid against Leninism though not against Marx himself, but there are significant differences in Dewey's and Marx' conceptions of appropriate scientific procedure; and on *psychological* matters, some of Dewey's criticisms of Marx were wide of the mark, others were on target, while their agreement on the interrelationship of the biological and the social should not mask their divergence in respect to the flexibility of human nature, including its psychological aspects. As far as human values are concerned, however, there is a far greater fundamental convergence of positions than Dewey ever dreamed with respect to the critique of the dominance of economic factors in the daily lives of individuals.

I pointed out, when mentioning Dewey's 1898 criticism of Marx' labor theory of value, that Dewey's remarks indicated a failure, on his part, to see that theory, whatever its intrinsic merits or demerits, as a Marxian characterization of the overweaning role played by exchange values in "those societies", as the first two lines of the text of Marx' *Capital* express it, "in which the capitalist mode of production prevails"[25], rather than as Marx' last word on the role of value in *any possible* society. The whole of *Capital* is, after all, a contextual, non-foundationalist *critique* of such exchange value dominated societies and of the commodity fetishism that inevitably occurs therein; Marx' own future vision, as value-drenched in its fashion as Dewey's, looks to the *supplanting* of this state of affairs. (Two important recent books bring out this point very well with respect to Marx, each in its own way: the English translation of Michel Henry's *Marx*[26] and *Marx's Social Critique of Culture*[27] by my friend and former teacher, Louis Dupré.) Unfortunately, the obsession - this is not too strong a word, I think - with painstakingly detailing the critique of the present state of affairs that characterized all of Marx' later life was perpetuated, albeit in a far more superficial way, in the thoughts and writings of the next generation of Marxist social democrats, and it is within this atmosphere that the first Deweyan criticism of Marx that I have cited - made, after all, only fifteen years after Marx' death - must be understood.

The misunderstanding that the basic framework of the thought of the mature Marx is economic, quantitative, and rigidly causal in nature,

rather than philosophically concerned with human values in their socio-historical context, perpetuated itself not only in the later thought of John Dewey but also in the theory and praxis of those who arrogated Marx' banner to themselves over the century that has now passed since Marx' death. So it is that most of Dewey's critique of Marx*ism*, meaning by this the doctrines of these individuals, the so-called "orthodox Marxists", is unexceptionable; but by the same token much of it is simply wrong when viewed as a critique of the ideas of Marx himself.

NOTES

1. 'Dewey, Wittgenstein, Quine, Sellars, and Davidson', in *Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 317.
2. John Dewey, *Lectures on Psychological and Political Ethics: 1898*, ed. D.F. Koch, New York, Hafner Press, 1976, p. 399.
3. *Ibid.* p. 200.
4. See Cornelius Castoriadis, *Crossroads in the Labyrinth*, tr. K. Saper and M.H. Ryle, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1984, esp. pp. 315-20, for a critique of this Marxian notion that casts it in a foundationalist light.
5. John Dewey and James Tufts, *Ethics*, New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1908, p. 513.
6 *Ibid.* p. 535.
7. Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, revised ed., New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1932, pp. 475-76.
8. Dewey, *The Middle Works*, Vol. 11:1918-1919, ed. J.A. Boydston, Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1982, p. 161.
9. Dewey, *The Middle Works*, Vol. 12: 1920, ed. J.A. Boydston, Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1982, p. 20.
10. Dewey, *Impressions of Soviet Russia and the Revolutionary World*, New York, New Republic, Inc., 1929.
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12. Jim Cork, 'John Dewey, Karl Marx, and Democratic Socialism', *Antioch Review* 9(Dec. 1949), p. 435.
13. *Ibid.* p. 438.
14. Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1939, p. 83.
15. *Ibid.* p. 84.
16. *Ibid.* p. 54.
17. *Ibid.* p. 87.

18. *Loc. cit.*
19. *Ibid.* p. 98.
20. *Ibid.* p. 99.
21. V.I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, New York, International Publishers, 1970.
22. This qualification, "at a given time", establishes Leninist Marxism as a version of the historicist-tinged "modest foundationalism" which John Kekes distinguishes from ahistorical "classical foundationalism". Kekes, a defender of "modest foundationalism" in principle, defines a "worldview" as "the defence of a cluster of ideals guiding policies for coping with the enduring problems of a particular society at a particular time", considers Marxism to be one such worldview, and contends that "Philosophy is the construction and justification of worldviews." - Kekes, 'Philosophy, Historicism, and Foundationalism', *Philosophia* 13, 3-4 (Oct. 1983), p. 214.
23. Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx,* with new introduction, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1962, p. 6.
24. Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, p. 100.
25. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, tr. S. Moore and E. Aveling, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961, p. 35.
26. Michel Henry, *Marx*, tr. K. McLaughlin, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1983.
27. Louis Dupré, *Marx's Social Critique of Culture*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1983.

WILLIAM J. GAVIN

Text, Context, and the Existential Limit: A Jamesian Strain in Marx and Dewey

I. INTRODUCTION

Karl-Otto Apel, in his book *Charles Sanders Peirce, From Pragmatism to Pragmaticism*, opens with the following comment,

> Despite the exaggeration and simplification that is involved in the revelation of any complex truth, it can be said that in the world of so-called industrial society there are exactly three philosophies that really function. By this I do not mean that they are advocated, but that they in fact mediate between theory and practice in life. These philosophies are Marxism, Existentialism and Pragmatism.[1]

Furthermore, Apel specifically sees James' pragmatic contribution as involving an existentialist dimension.

> In his essay 'The Will to Believe', William James introduced Kierkegaard's central concern - the individual subjective interest in fundamentally unprovable and therefore existentially relevant truth - into the context of the community of scientific experimenters, proposing such truth as the limit of this community.[2]

Apel's emphasis on the existential dimension in James surfaces most clearly in two essays by the latter, 'The Sentiment of Rationality' and 'The Will to Believe'. In the former, James argues that we do not select one ultimate hypothesis over another for merely rational reasons. Conceptualizations of life are partial, and even if we had a completely non-perspectival outlook, the human being would continue to question, to point at the void beyond. Hence, for James, "[t]he bottom of being is left logically opaque to us".[3] In such a situation, he argues, we will select one hypothesis over another in terms of its sentimental appeal. We will not accept an outlook which is ultimately pessimistic, or one which gives us no set role to play.

> Pretend what we may, the whole man within us is at work when we form our philosophical opinions. Intellect, will, taste, and passion co-operate just as they do in practical affairs.[4]

W. J. Gavin (ed.), Context over Foundation, 49–73.
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This position is extended in his 1896 article 'The Will to Believe',where James argues that there are certain situations which are "forced, living and momentous", and where one must make a decision partially on passional grounds.

> *Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds.*[5]

This position has often been misinterpreted as a plea for mere subjectivism, as a thesis that we can believe whatever makes us feel good. But James clearly argues against such an outlook. For example, we cannot simply believe that we are well and about while lying in bed overpowered by rheumatism; we cannot feel sure that the two dollars in our pocket are one hundred dollars; *etc.* The reason for this is that the will to believe is *only* operative in those situations where one has two diverse hypotheses, each *equally* coherent and each capable of corresponding to empirical data to an *equal* extent. What James is not so clear about is whether there are any hypotheses whose *content* by definition precludes them from being forced, living, and momentous, and requiring the will to believe. A seemingly obvious candidate would be hypotheses in science. (We shall see the importance of this issue for Dewey and Marx later on.) However, I think James is at his best when he does not exclude any hypothesis by definition from the will to believe domain, and in the following paper I want to argue that the will to believe becomes operative at a crucial stage in both the philosophy of Marx and of Dewey, though neither is clearly aware of it. In this sense, a reconstruction of these philosophic positions shows each to be more Jamesian than either would have thought, and in addition shows James' influence in areas such as the limits of the social and political - areas which he perhaps did not fully intend to influence.

II. DEWEY

Dewey is clearly an anti-foundationalist philosopher, one for whom philosophy reflects and perfects via critical analyses the concerns and values of a specific community.

> ... the distinctive office, problems and subjectmatter of philosophy grow out of the stresses and strains in the community life in which a given form of philosophy arises, and ... accordingly, its specific problems vary with the changes in human life that are always going on and that at times constitute a crisis and a turning point in human

history.[6]

From this perspective, it follows that there is no such thing as a completely non-contextual philosophy. Indeed the attempt to find such an outlook is actually an attempt to find certainty. Such an outlook would transcend all contexts and as such would be relevant to none. Rather Dewey says, when "context is taken into account, it is seen that every generalization occurs under limiting conditions set by the contextual situation".[7] Certainty must be rejected as a quest, for it fosters several false dualisms. The most important of these is the subject/object dichotomy, often found as the debate between traditional idealism and materialism; this dualism results in the ripping of an organism out of its specific environmental context, so as to see him or her as an impartial spectator, viewing experience or being in a detached, objective fashion. Philosophy, when it views such an outlook as optimal, is advocating the rejection of context. It leads to an unacceptable (because non-contextual) position, where true human progress is no longer possible; or, differently stated, it leads to a simple repetition of the past, of the past of philosophy with a capital "P" (in Rorty's sense of the term)[8], and not to a confrontation with and idealization of the best aspects of the present situation. From this, philosophy needs to be saved or recovered. As Dewey put it,

> Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men.[9]

and again

> I believe that philosophy in America will be lost between chewing a historic cud long since reduced to woody fiber, or an apologetics for lost causes (lost to natural science), or a scholastic, schematic formalism, unless it can somehow bring to consciousness America's own needs and its own implicit principle of successful action.[10]

But what method was it that Dewey advocated to accomplish such a task - or set of tasks? In a contextualist philosophy, a method must be employed which can deal with change and novelty, a method which identifies inquiry with discovery of the new rather than with exclusive repetition of the old. Such a method, Dewey argued, can be found in the development of modern science, and he advocated that the *form* of scientific methodology, as opposed to any specific content, serves as a model. The scientific method, whose origin began with Bacon's

realization that knowledge is power, has, for Dewey, the following characteristics[11]: first, it is future rather than past oriented. Ideas, *qua* hypotheses, are to be tried out, not received uncritically. Secondly, the method advocates the interpenetration of thought and action. To have an idea is insufficient; one must act upon it in the "laboratory". Third, it was communal, or co-operative. Individuals, left to themselves will simply repeat the experiments of other scientists, or worse, fall into self-deception. Finally, the method was self-corrective. It did not advocate certainty, but rather recognized the novel and the precarious. The method "learns from failures as from successes". As late as 1948 Dewey wrote, in the second introduction to *Reconstruction in Philosophy*,

> Here, then, lies the reconstructive work to be done by philosophy. It must undertake to do for the development of inquiry into human affairs and hence into morals what philosophers of the last few centuries did for promotion of scientific inquiry in physical and physiological conditions and aspects of human life.[12]

Now a first criticism of such a suggestion from a Marxist (or indeed other) perspective might well be that it ignores fundamental differences between the natural and the social or human. That is, Dewey's emphasis on interaction and transaction between organism and environment downplays the class stucture and ignores the social nature that is constituted by one's labor, by the creation of one's species-being through labor, through praxis.

However, I believe that Dewey might be able to respond, at least partially, to such criticism, indicating that all he wished to apply was the *form* of scientific method and not any specific *content*. Indeed, to do otherwise would be to lapse into a neglect of specifying contextual dimensions. However, what the critique begins to point up is a serious criticism which can be gotten out in several ways. For the sake of brevity, I will limit myself to two versions. First, the form/content distinction is *itself* one of those dualisms which Dewey over and over again renounces. In *Art as Experience*, for example, he specifically renounces disjunctive analysis of works of art from *either* an exclusively formal or an exclusively content-wise perspective. Indeed, he tells the reader that

> [t]he truth of the matter is that what is form in one connection is matter in another and vice-versa. Color that is matter with respect to expressiveness of some qualities and values is form when it is used to convey delicacy, brilliance, gayety.[13]

A second way of making this point might be to suggest that Dewey's analysis of science is not actually how science proceeds, but is rather an idealization. What is at issue here is the very meaning of the term "science", and "scientific method", and whether that method can be separated off from its specific social and historical context.

It must be noted that Dewey himself, at times, seems well aware of this. In 'The Pattern of Inquiry', for example, Dewey gives what is perhaps the most detailed description of his method. Indeterminate situations become "problematic" through the use of inquiry, that is, they become more determinate insofar as we crystallize what has gone wrong specifically, and then hypothesize what to do about it.

> *Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole.*[14]

But here Dewey is careful to say that logical forms of inquiry are not transcendental;

> formal conceptions arise out of ... ordinary transactions; they are not imposed upon them from on high or from any external and a priori source. But when they are formed they are also *formative*; they regulate the proper conduct of the activities out of which they develop.[15]

And again

> The way in which men *do* 'think' denotes, as it is *here* interpreted, simply the ways in which men at a given time carry on their inquiries. So far as it is used to register a difference from the ways in which they *ought* to think, it denotes a difference like that between good and bad farming or good and bad medical practice.[16]

Here the form of scientific method does not seem to separate completely from specific content and, indeed, it is conceivable that it might possibly be abandoned. On the other hand, the form of the scientific method, as envisioned by Dewey, has had success, and is, on that basis, powerful, *i.e.*, itself *in*forming. As John Smith has put it, in Dewey's view, "... logical forms which have proved themselves effective *up to a given time* can be regarded as *a priori* with regard to the inquiry at hand".[17] Dewey sees scientific method as incremental, as adding on relational properties to the world of common sense experience (not substituting for the latter). To quote Smith again, for Dewey:

> ... scientific inquiry necessarily involves the *transformation* of familiar commonsense objects with their immediate cultural qualities and as- sociations into scientific objects which are shorn of these associations and are meant to have universal import... [A]n increment of meaning accrues to things when they are seen in the context of scientific inquiry ... .[18]

In short, the form of the scientific method is one of *comparative* intellectual disinterestedness and Dewey seemed to believe, and to be able to give some reasons warranting the belief, that the use of this method could enable one to go from the relatively particular (specific cultural situation) to the comparatively universal (what specific situations have in common). Such a position is defensible, but it does presuppose a Jamesian belief factor. Consider, for contrast effect, the view of science proposed by Thomas Kuhn in his text, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. For Kuhn, what one calls "true" or "false", or even "meaningful", in science is determined by the already accepted paradigm of a given "normal science". Normal science is science based on an assumed "paradigm" - a word used frequently and not univocally by Kuhn.[19] A paradigm is a model or standard illustration of scientific achievement which includes law, theory, application and instrumentation together and is more "basic" than any of these.[20] Normal science is cumulative because progress is defined in terms of the already assumed paradigm. Revolutionary science describes the type of activity which occurs as we move from one paradigm to another. Such movement is cataclysmic. We leap holistically from one framework to another by a process not capable of *complete*, rational explanation. In some sense, a conversion experience is involved.[21] In other words, there is no meaning invariance (*e.g.* in terms of a common observation language, or a scientific method) which endures in the transition from one method to another.

Now my purpose here is not to defend Kuhn's position wholeheartedly, simply to use his view as a foil to highlight Dewey's assumptions about science. In the end, Dewey had, I believe, great *faith* in the scientific method. He took over a position originated by Peirce that the method of science was superior to other methods, such as tenacity, authority, and the a priori, and adopted Peirce's view that the members of a scientific community are united by a "cheerful hope" that some opinion is ultimately fated to be agreed upon in an open way by those who practice the method of science.[22] Dewey differed from Peirce in consciously applying the scientific method not only to areas of natural science, but to areas of social concern, to the realms of politics and morals. In other words, Dewey advocated a position where a truly

democratic approach to human issues could take place only by applying the scientific method, and he believed that applying that method would ultimately lead to progress.

Such an outlook, while laudable in its tolerance, does not confront the possibility that, in certain situations, one person or one society might be confronted with two theoretical accounts of an issue, both equally coherent and corresponding equally well to empirical facts, where a decision nonetheless had to be made. Such a position, albeit on a personal level, is precisely what James had in mind in 'The Will to Believe'. In such a situation the issue is forced, living and momentous.

Indeed, one might bring out the Jamesian element here by comparing Kuhn's view of science with Dewey's; both positions are coherent, *i.e.* "meaningful"; both can employ empirical evidence to which the theories will correspond. To reconstruct Dewey in this fashion for comparative purposes is, of course, unfair to Dewey who preceded Kuhn. But it does serve to point up the fact that Dewey, at times, was over-optimistic about at least the form of what he called "scientific method". Or, differently stated, he exercised the will to believe, consciously or unconsciously, or quasi-consciously.

III. MARX

Marx, no less than Dewey, was dissatisified with a view of philosophy as foundational, as merely reflecting or copying a pre-existent and static reality. This is elliptically apparent in his oft-quoted statement that "[t]he philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it".[23] But the contextualism of philosophy is even more clearly stated in an 1842 newspaper article on press censorship. Marx says:

> ... philosophers do not grow like mushrooms, out of the earth; they are the outgrowth of their period, their nation, whose most subtle, delicate and invisible juices abound in the philosophical ideas. The same spirit that constructs the philosophical system in the mind of the philosopher builds the railways with the hands of the trade. Philosophy does not reside outside this world just as the mind does not reside outside man just because it is not located in his belly.[24]

Commenting on this text, Avineri notes that it has an implicit critical dimension:

> Philosophy is always related to historical actuality, but the philosophical medium itself sometimes severs the link between

> reality and its philosophical reflection. This, according to Marx, may cause the illusion that the object of philosophy is philosophy itself. A merely contemplative attitude, according to Marx, contains its objects in its contemplation and is thus object-less.[25]

Philosophy, from this perspective, has at least a necessary role to play, for it is only as an adequate interpretation of the world evolves that change is possible. Avineri continues,

> In Marx' opinion, theory must evolve an adequate interpretation of the world before it will be able to change it. The history of philosophy is the continuous search for such an adequate picture of the world. Once such a picture has been formed, it dialectically abolishes itself as a reflection of reality and begins to determine the shaping of a new reality."[26]

Note that the important assumption here concerns whether or not an 'adequate' picture can *always* be completely formed. This is the basic point of my comparison between Dewey and Marx, and one to which I will shortly return.

Marx was dissatisfied with both traditional naturalism, and with its idealistic alternative. This represented simply a false dichotomy.

> The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism - that of Feuerbach included - is that the thing [*Gegenstand*], reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object* [*Objekt*] or of *contemplation* [*Anschauung*], but not as *human sensuous activity, practice*, not subjectively. Hence it happened that the *active* side, in contra-distinction to materialism, was developed by idealism - but only abstractly, since, of course, idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such.[27]

In place of such a false bifurcation, Marx wished to put a more holistic account, which might be termed either an idealistic naturalism or a naturalistic idealism. Arguments for both versions have been made and, pragmatically, they may well amount to a matter of emphasis. What is more clear is that the extreme formulation of either position results in too much of a reductionism. An overly naturalistic account of Marx' philosophy results in some form of "vulgar Marxism", *i.e.*, in a view where the active role of the subject is extremely diminished, if not obliterated. It must be said that Marx himself is at least unintentionally responsible for this overly naturalistic account. In the *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, for example, Marx takes up the question of legal relationships and regards these as not

self-sustaining or self-understandable; rather "...they are rooted in the material conditions of life".[28] In this they are typical of a whole series of disciplines, including politics and philosophy, which emerge as part of the superstructure, the latter being built upon a "base" which is economic. As Marx put it:

> In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.[29]

Over-emphasis on texts such as this one ignores the idealist dimension of Marx' philosophy, and downplays the view of the human being as creating his own species-being through labor, through praxis. As one commentator, Avineri, has put it:

> The origins of Marx' epistemology ... are deeply embedded in the German idealist tradition ... According to Marx, nature cannot be discussed as if it were severed from human action, for nature as a potential object for human cognition has already been affected by previous human action or contact. Hence nature is never an opaque datum. The phrases 'humanized nature' and 'humanism equals naturalism' recur in Marx' writings, and 'naturalism' in his sense is virtually the opposite of what is generally implied by this term in traditional philosophical discussion ... The identification of human consciousness with the practical process of reality as shaped by man is Marx' epistemological and historiosophical achievement.[30]

Such an outlook clearly restores the activist dimension to Marx' philosophy and clearly gives the human self (*qua* social animal) an, and perhaps even *the*, essential role to play. But an interesting irony occurs at just this juncture. Avineri admits that Marx' outlook is different from that of Hegel in the sense that

> ... the constructive nature of human consciousness cannot be limited to merely cognitive action. He [Marx] views cognitive action

> as the whole process of the development and evolution of reality: getting acquainted with reality constitutes shaping and changing it.[31]

From such a perspective one shapes nature, and one's being is in turn shaped by it. "Where Feuerbach naturalizes man," Avineri argues, "Marx humanizes nature."[32] Such a view is non-reductive in that it does not result in a static foundational rationalism. Taken in a wider sense, however, it is reductive - to the extent that nature always appears as meaningful. Avineri is explicit on this, saying above that human nature is *never* an opaque datum, and even going on to draw an explicit contrast between Marx (for Avineri at least) and William James:

> Whereas pragmatism starts with the premise that man adapts himself to a given, pre-existing environment, Marx views man as shaping his world. Marx' views are also quite incompatible with William James' other premise about the basic irrationality of the external world. Marx, on the contrary, always argues that the world is open to rational cognition because it is ultimately shaped by man himself and man can reach an adequate understanding of his historical activity.[33]

Such a contrast is, I would argue, overdrawn, at least. True, the pragmatists - or at least James and Dewey - are realists in the sense that one always has to conform to an external reality. To assume otherwise would be, for James, to engage in "vicious intellectualism", *viz.* "*[t]he treating of a name as excluding from the fact named what the name's definition fails positively to include....*"[34] But note that, in *Experience and Nature*, Dewey, while arguing against the alleged all-inclusiveness of cognitive experience, nonetheless also argues against any experience being defined in advance as unavailable to human cognition:

> It is not denied that any experienced subject-matter whatever may *become* an object of reflection and cognitive inspection. But the emphasis is on 'become'; the cognitive never is all-inclusive, that is, when the material of a prior non-cognitive experience is the object of knowledge, it and the act of knowing are themselves included within a new and wider non-cognitive experience - and *this* situation can never be transcended.[35]

Stated differently, reality is malleable, continuously changing, a *quasi*-chaos, in Jamesian terms.[36] We could not simply conform to it even if we wanted to. Secondly, all attempts to interpret the "really real" themselves become part of the really real. As James says,"Experience itself, taken at large, can grow by its edges."[37] In

one sense, then, the connection between pragmatism (James and Dewey) and Marx is much closer than Avineri would allow for.

But there is a second perspective from which Avineri himself at times seems to realize that this contrast is overdrawn. That is, having offered an idealistic and rather rationalistic account of Marx' epistemology and metaphysics, he then notes that this account is inapplicable because of existing social-political conditions.

> Marx' epistemology occupies a middle position between classical materialism and classical idealism. Historically it draws on both traditions; and, since it synthesizes the two traditions, it transcends the classic dichotomy between subject and object. Indirectly this synthesis solves the Kantian antinomy between the cognitive and the moral spheres. But Marx thinks the present circumstances still make it impossible to practice this new, adequate epistemology: alienation indicates the continuing existence of the dichotomy between subject and object, as a result of the still distorted process of cognition.
>
> Marx' epistemology thus conceals an internal tension. It tries to solve the traditional epistemological problems, but it tacitly holds that human consciousness could operate according to the new epistemology only if the obstacles in its way in present society were eliminated.[38]

This statement, though somewhat underplayed in the text, is of crucial importance. What it seems to assert can be put best in terms of a contrary-to-fact conditional: this is what would work best epistemically if we were able to employ it, which by definition we are not. In such an outlook, metaphysically speaking, the really real is not presently co-extensive with the known, but it is co-extensive with the knowable, *i.e.*, with what will ultimately come about. In this respect the outlook is identical with Peirce's belief, shared by Dewey, that some opinion is ultimately fated to be agreed upon, given world and time enough. Two crucial questions remain unanswered however.

First, how do we get from here to there; and second, why does the situation of alienation exist? Marx' response to those questions, is, on the surface at least, well-known. We are alienated because of capitalist modes of production and the relations of production derived therefrom, and we get from here to there by championing the cause of one specific class, namely the proletariat, *i.e.*, by being consciously partisan. However, several commentators have found Marx' description of the causes of alienation unsatisfying. Thus Tom Goff, for example, in his book *Marx and Mead, Contributions to a Sociology of Knowledge,* applauds Marx' portrayal of the

> authentic existence and essence of man in terms of the idea of praxis. The natural and authentic problematic of human life is ... social man's interaction with and humanizing of nature; his historical transformation of nature (and therefore of himself as a part of nature) which is both a sustainment of life and its constant development ... . Man is basically a problem-solver in this sense.[39]

But in Goff's opinion there is something very problematic here and it concerns man's propensity for alienation, his tendency to succumb to a particularly historical moment of praxis.

> ... Marx tends simply to *state* the position on alienation, and then moves directly to specific critiques. He fails to conceptualize, at least not with any clarity, the process and appearance of alienation itself. Without such clarification, it would appear that there is a basic contradiction or at least an incompleteness in the critical perspective. On the one hand, Marx presumes the nature of human reality as an on-going, continuous process of change in respect to dialectically related material products, social forms, ideas and values. On the other hand, this process is apparently *not* continuous; the problematic of alienation intervenes. But why does this occur? What is the connection between praxis and alienation that would explain the latter, and to what degree does alienation deny praxis? If praxis is a continuous process in which 'men set themselves only such problems as they can solve', then what is the basis in praxis itself, for the emergence of this problematic?
>
> In so far as these questions are not answered in Marx' own work, it could be argued that the concept of alienation, as a problematic specific to human life, is simply an *ad hoc* or residual category, tacked on to, yet logically inconsistent with, the theory of praxis. Alienation could be considered an idea that is inconsistent with the 'utopian flavor' of the idea of continuous development, yet none the less an idea that is necessary in order to account for the historical experience of discontinuity and tension in human history.[40]

Goff admits that the tension here can be reduced by emphasizing the material or mechanistic aspect of praxis, but such a view diminishes consciousness to a mere epiphenomenon; in short, it approaches a vulgar Marxism. Alienation is seen as caused by natural factors, and it will disappear as these factors themselves evolve in accordance with impersonal laws of economic development. If this option is not selected, however, and if one is not persuaded that there are two

completely different versions of Marx, early and late, one is left with the conclusion that Marx' theory is less idealistic than Avineri asserts, and certainly with the feeling that reality is somewhat opaque for both Marx and James. Differently stated, at a critical point in his thinking, Marx chose to exercise James' "will to believe". Unlike Dewey, he did not choose to believe in a particular method, but rather in a particular class, viz., the proletariat.

In moving from philosophy to the proletariat, Marx moved from form to content, not unlike Dewey's move regarding scientific method - but Dewey tried to move from content to form.[41] Both moves are "illegitimate", *i.e.*, not completely self-justifying. Dewey seems at times to have seen this and at times not to have. It is not clear whether Marx saw it, but certainly the issue surfaces in the continual debate between critical Marxists and scientific Marxists, *i.e.*, between those Marxists who are more voluntarist, more willing to take a chance, more suspicious of science, and those who see Marx' main contribution as a scientific socialism, a description of the inevitable progress of economic history.[42]

IV. CONCLUSION

In the foregoing, I have not been arguing against the views either of Dewey or of Marx. Rather, my purpose was merely to indicate one issue on which they overlap, a specifically Jamesian issue, and one of which neither philosopher was totally aware. Specifically, that issue concerns situations where one has to make decisions, before all the evidence is in, so to speak. One can marshal evidence, both in terms of correspondence and in terms of cohesiveness, for alternative theories. This occurs for Dewey on the issue of method, and for Marx on the issue of class. Or rather, I should say, it should occur. A reconstructed view of Marx and of Dewey shows, I believe, that there are not available completely objective reasons for their choice of either a specific method or a specific class. There are, rather, conflicting opinions where a forced living and momentous decision has to be made. Dewey, to an extent, avoids such a confrontation by espousing too great a faith in the scientific method. He seemed sincerely to believe that social and political issues could and should be solved via this method. Marx, at least to an equal extent, avoids the issue by placing ultimate faith in a particular class and by not allowing the issue to come up. One is to remain partisan and to reject skeptical issues - such as those fostered by situations where the will to believe is required - as merely contemplative and not truly practical. As a generalization, it would seem that any non-foundationalist philosophy, or a contextualist

position, would seem to demand, at some level, a Jamesian will to believe. There is nothing wrong with such a commitment, so long as it is recognized and reasons are given for it. Refusal to admit this results in the pretense that one really has a foundationalist position, or in an omission of the reasons why an overt belief or commitment has been made.

I began with a quote from the beginning of Karl-Otto Apel's recent book; let me close with a quote from the end of this text. While cautioning against the public pragmatism of the West which tends to divide value-free scientific rationality from a supposedly private sphere of ethical and existential decisions, Apel nonetheless notes that

> In 'The Will to Believe' James gave a classical defense of the justifiability of the existential mediation of theory and praxis in "limit situations," according to which every free and conscious human being is an 'individual' ...in every conceivable type of social order. This existential perspective serves to establish the pragmatic limits of claims that can be made not only upon the individual as these claims are formulated in Peirce's [and I would add, at least to an extent, Dewey's] logical Socialism, but, even more so, upon Marx' much farther reaching theory, no matter how justified the latter might be in calling upon the individual to integrate his existential engagement into that of Society.[43]

V. EPILOGUE: TEXT VS. CONTEXT

Thus far it has been argued that any non-foundationalist philosophy, or any contextualist position, seems to demand, at some level, a Jamesian will to believe. One necessary ingredient in James' position, and therefore also in the reconstructed philosophies of Dewey and Marx, is an existential 'spirit of seriousness'. Admittedly, when certainty or foundationalism is rejected, there is a sense in which "play", *i.e.*, the active participation of the organism or class, becomes important. But, and the 'but' is important, all is not play.

Most recently, the spirit of seriousness has come under attack by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who has argued that writing itself prevents us from the possibility of having any metaphysics of presence, *i.e.*, of attaining certainty. Derrida asserts his 'position' vigorously in the following text:

> Turned towards the lost or impossible presence of the absent origin, this structuralist [or logocentric] thematic of broken immediacy is therefore the saddened *negative*, nostalgic guilty,

> Rousseauistic side of the thinking of play whose other side would be the Nietzschean *affirmation*, that is the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and without origin which is offered to an active interpretation. *This affirmation then determines the noncenter otherwise than as the loss of the center.* And it plays without security.[44]

For Derrida writing, not speech, is primary. "There is nothing outside of the text."[45] Further, writing always leaves something (no*thing*) out, condemning us to eternal incompleteness, leaving only a "trace". "Writing is one of the representatives of the trace in general, it is not the trace itself. *The trace itself does not exist.* (To exist is to be, to be an entity, a being - present, *to on.*)"[46]; and again, "[t]he trace is not presence but is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces, and refers beyond itself. The trace has, properly speaking, no place [*avoir lieu* - also does not take place], for effacement belongs to the very structure of the trace."[47] While these last two texts might be read to contain an echo of the "ineffable", at least one commentator, Richard Rorty, holds that, in developing his notion of *différance*, Derrida adopts a much more radical position than this. "*Différance*", Rorty tells us, "unlike trace, has no more to do with signs than it does with things or gods or minds or any of the other things for which Kantian philosophy has sought the unconditioned conditions."[48] What then does Derrida mean by the neologism "*différance*"? One commentator says the following:

> By differance ... he [Derrida] means a combined movement of deferment in time and differentiation or distinction in space or in kind... . Differance is thus more 'primordial' than the substance or presence of each element in the series or structure. The apparent self-identity of each element is an effect of its difference from and deferral of other elements, none of which has an identity of its own outside the 'play' of differential relations ... . To be at all, each thing must be constituted so it escapes the traditional metaphysical category of being, if being is, as it always is, according to Derrida, defined as a form of presence. Differance can never be present, even though it constitutes presence.[49]

Michael Ryan, from whose work *Marxism and Deconstruction* the above description of *différance* is taken, believes that there are important lessons which these two schools of thought can learn from each other - if Marxism is not taken in the narrow "scientific" sense and deconstruction is not perceived as merely literary criticism. What are

the implications of the deconstructionist themes described above for Marxism? In Ryan's analysis,

> The implication of undecidability for Marxism is that the formal axioms of scientific Marxism - that revolutionary change is necessarily a result of developing productive forces, that dialectical materialism is the way of understanding the world, and so on - are necessarily, like any such system, incomplete.[50]

It is in the Marx of the *Grundrisse* that the similarity to Derrida is most apparent, especially regarding relation, difference, and antagonism. "Marx admits that a category like 'production in general,' which seems to reduce difference to identity, is a 'rational abstraction' that fixes a 'common element' that nonetheless is 'itself segmented many times over and splits into [*Auseinanderfahrendes*] different determinations'[51]"; and again, this time quoting Marx, the "categories of bourgeois economics possess a truth for all other forms of society ... but always with an essential difference [*Unterschied*]."[52] It is Marx' notion of 'essential difference', Ryan argues, that rejects any attempt at a final picturing of the world:

> Marx's description of the double act of elevating production to an eternal truth and of debasing distribution by relegating it to history is in its form very similar to Derrida's description of the initiating metaphysical act of elevating consciousness, ideal meaning, self-presence in the mind, and therefore speech to an eternal truth, and of simultaneously debasing spatialization, history, social institutionality, and therefore writing through banishment to an outside.[53]

As a final example, in a deconstructive reading of Marx' *Capital*, Volume One, Ryan argues that Marx "disallows the categorical binary opposition between economic development and political force and that the two, rather than being homogeneous instances that 'interact,' are constituted as an undecidable limit or differential relation of force that cannot be described as an ontology of interactive, yet distinct things or homogeneous entities. Each one is the other, undecidably."[54] Attempts, therefore, to isolate a concept like "economic development" from "political force" are as inadequate as attempts to isolate "productive forces" from "productive relations". Once again, the attack on "scientific" Marxism is evident. Indeed, viewed deconstructively, scientific Marxism, by advocating the distinction between economics and politics, legitimates "a division of labor that preserves the coercive work form...".[55]

There is much in all of this that agrees with and further substantiates the anti-foundationalism of Marx. However, it is significant that, in the very last sentence of the text, Ryan apologizes for giving "short shrift" to Sartre in the third chapter, and suggests that the latter's critique of orthodox Marxism is quite similar to his own approach.[56] Deconstruction has indeed been criticized for leading to a reactionary non-activist relativism, and Ryan several times argues against such an interpretation; "a possible plurality of truth descriptions does not imply a liberal pluralist vision of the equal validity of all political positions".[57] Again, only "from the viewpoint of capitalist rationalism or party patriarchalism does the persistent positing of an alternative, of a continuous displacement along a seriality of revolutions which is multisectorial and without conclusion, seem 'irrational' or 'paralytic'."[58] But the preservation of pluralities of truths does entail the very real possibility of being confronted with two competing hypotheses of equal strength, and having to make a decision which appears as 'forced, living, and momentous'. Ryan not only alludes to the existentialism of Sartre in a way quite parallel to James' will to believe; he accuses Derrida of going too far, of being too anti-subjective.[59] Deconstruction is to be lauded for its criticism of the Cartesian/Husserlian subject; but there is nonetheless more of a self, through processive/progressive evolution, than one has in a Derridian analysis. Fragile and derivative as it may be, the processive self of James, making its decisions in fear and trembling, and in a spirit of seriousness, is more cumulative than it is in Derrida.[60] And a reconstruction of the philosophy of Marx reveals this type of self, exercising 'the will to believe' if only in a quasi-conscious fashion.

A similar point about 'seriousness' and the will to believe can be made by looking at the recent evaluation of John Dewey by the American philosopher Richard Rorty. To begin with, Rorty is clearly engaged in giving up the quest for certainty. In doing so, he purports to be arguing as a pragmatist, or at least as someone comfortable within the pragmatist tradition. "The great fallacy of the tradition, the pragmatists tell us, is to think that the metaphors of vision, correspondence, mapping, picturing, and representation which apply to small routine assertions will apply to large and debatable ones."[61] In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Rorty offers a more general synopsis of his position:

> Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey are in agreement that the notion of knowledge as accurate representation, made possible by special mental processes, and intelligible through a general theory of representation, needs to be abandoned. For all three, the notions of 'foundations of knowledge' and of philosophy as revolving

> around the Cartesian attempt to answer the epistemological sceptic are set aside ... . They set aside epistemology and metaphysics as possible disciplines.[62]

Such an approach does require Rorty to perform radical surgery on Dewey and James, since both of these thinkers did offer both an epistemology and a metaphysics. This he does not shrink from doing; "... the Dewey of *Experience and Nature*, the James of *Radical Empiricism* ... seem to me merely weakened versions of idealism..."[63]; and again,

> Throughout his life, he [Dewey] wavered between a therapeutic stance toward philosophy and another, quite different, stance - one in which philosophy was to become "scientific" and "empirical" and to do something serious, systematic, important, and constructive.[64]

When properly cauterized, Dewey's philosophy would be seen as, overall, playful or conversational, as opposed to serious.

> Dewey's work helps us put aside that spirit of seriousness which artists traditionally lack and philosophers are traditionally supposed to maintain. For the spirit of seriousness can only exist in an intellectual world in which human life is an attempt to attain an end beyond life, and escape from freedom into the atemporal.[65]

Going further, Rorty - like Ryan - does not see the rejection of foundationalism or certainty as entailing the position of relativism.

> "Relativism" is the view that every belief on a certain topic, or perhaps about any topic, is as good as every other. No one holds this view. Except for the occasional co-operative freshman, one cannot find anybody who says that two incompatible opinions on an important topic are equally good. Those philosophers who get called "relativists" are those who say that the grounds for choosing between such options are less algorithmic than had been thought.[66]

Having disposed of relativism as a false issue, Rorty goes on to describe what he thinks is the major area of contention.

> [T]he real issue is not between people who think one view is as good as another and people who do not. It is between those who think our culture, or purpose, or intuitions cannot be supported except conversationally, and people who still hope for other sorts

of support."[67]

Again there is much here which supports the anti-foundationalist thesis of Dewey. But, in addition, Rorty seems to have gone *from* the thesis that we do not have algorithmic grounds for anything *to* the conclusion that all we have is conversation. From a broader, more 'traditional' Deweyian perspective, community now seems synonymous with conversation, and the only parameters of conversation are shaped by discourse. As with Derrida, here also "there is nothing outside the text". Context is important, but the text is the context. There are no existential constraints, only conversational constraints. "...Socratic conversation is an activity which is its own end."[68] Success equals continuance, or keeping up the conversation. Now there is surely a sense in which Rorty is right in his portrayal of James and Dewey here, namely the sense in which for all of us in life, 'the nectar is in the journey', 'it's not the victory but the battle', *etc.* But this last way of putting it (the battle) brings up a point which Rorty sometimes underplays. Dewey was a social reformist, not simply a conversationalist; he viewed experience as "*precarious* and as stable"[69]; Rorty himself points out that James was exercising his own will to believe in holding that life feels like a real fight. At the end of *Pragmatism* James tells the reader:

> I find myself willing to take the universe to be really dangerous and adventurous, without therefore backing out and crying 'no play'.... It is then perfectly possible to accept sincerely a drastic kind of universe from which the element of 'seriousness' is not to be expelled. Who does so is, it seems to me, a genuine pragmatist. He is willing to live on a scheme of uncertified possibilities which he trusts; willing to pay with his own person, if need be, for the realization of the ideals which he frames.[70]

Rorty admits that life does feel like a real fight, but puts this down to our being 'footnotes' to Plato. "But", he asserts, "if James' own pragmatism were taken seriously, if pragmatism became central to our culture and our self-image, then it would no longer feel that way. We do not know how it *would* feel."[71] But it is hard indeed, if not impossible, to reconcile this thesis with the existentialist sense of the tragic found throughout James' works. Life is a game for James; it is the playing that counts. But in the Jamesian game not everyone wins; indeed what makes hope possible also demands that the tragic be taken seriously. James asks the reader:

> Doesn't the fact of 'no' stand at the very core of life? Doesn't the

> very 'seriousness' that we attribute to life mean that ineluctable noes and losses form a part of it, that there are genuine sacrifices somewhere, and that something permanently drastic and bitter always remains at the bottom of its cup?[72]

Rorty seems at times to realize that the same is true for Dewey. He chooses Dewey over Foucault, for example, because although they "are trying to do the same thing, Dewey seems ... to have done it better, simply because his vocabulary allows room for unjustifiable hope, and an ungroundable but vital sense of human solidarity."[73] And again,

> What Dewey suggested was that we keep the will to truth and the optimism that goes with it, but free them from the behaviorist notion that Behaviorese is Nature's Own Language *and* from the notion of man as "transcendental or enduring subject." For, in Dewey's hands, the will to truth is not the urge to dominate but the urge to create, to "attain working harmony among diverse desires".[74]

Dewey did indeed strive to preserve a will to truth and tried consistently to avoid forms of domination associated with, *e.g.*, progress identified exclusively with a particular class struggle. His scientific/pragmatic method was a sustained attempt to attain gradualistic consensus. But the method is, at times, a bit too sanguine. Dewey's optimism about his method cannot deal with those Jamesian moments which are forced, living, and momentous. There is hope in Dewey, and the hope is unjustifiable from any foundationalist perspective; but hope exists only if reality is, in James' terms, 'opaque', *i.e.*, only if the situation is not defined in advance as completely hopeless. This point can be stated somewhat differently by turning to the issue of metaphysics. In the introduction to *Consequences of Pragmatism* Rorty argues that the term 'realism' "has come to be synonymous with 'anti-pragmatism'".[75] Collapsing any forms of 'technical realism' into variants of 'intuitive realism', he argues that, for the latter, either "language does *not* go all the way down or, ...contrary to the appearances, all vocabularies are commensurable".[76] Phrased in these terms, I would argue, first, for James, language does not go all the way down, and to credit it with accomplishing this task would be to succumb to 'vicious intellectualism'.[77] Differently stated, metaphysically for James the 'really real' is not only broader than the (presently) known; it is broader than the know*able*. That is, our epistemic formulations will always leave something out, forcing us, at least sometimes, to act, with attendant 'serious' consequences.[78] Secondly, for Dewey, and also for Marx, the 'really real' is also

broader than the known. However both were at times tempted to accept the hypothesis that the really real *would*, ultimately, be co-extensive with the know*able*, *i.e.*, with what would be available if the proper method (pragmatism/partisanship) were carried out. Both, however, never seem to have completely felt comfortable with this position, and a reconstruction of their respective outlooks reveals that each requires a Jamesian 'will to believe'. In spite of recent assertions to the contrary, the *con*text is broader than the text. As Thomas Nagel has noted in responding to Rorty's position, "[u]nsolvable questions are not for that reason unreal".[79] Such questions do, however, at times, require that one introduce what Karl-Otto Apel earlier in this paper termed "the individual subjective interest in fundamentally unprovable and therefore existentially relevant truth"[80] - or in other words to exercise James' 'will to believe'.

NOTES

1. Karl-Otto Apel, *Charles S. Peirce, From Pragmatism to Pragmaticism,* translated by John Michael Krois, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1981, p. 1. An earlier, much shorter, version of the present paper originally appeared as 'Dewey, Marx, and James' "Will to Believe"', *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 28(1984).
2. *Ibid.* p. 4.
3. *The Writings of William James*, edited by John J. McDermott, New York, Random House, Modern Library Edition, 1968, p. 323.
4. *Ibid.* p. 334.
5. William James, 'The Will to Believe', in *William James, The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1927, p. 11.
6. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Boston, Beacon, 1957. pp. v-vi.
7. John Dewey, 'Context and Thought', in Richard Bernstein, (ed.), *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1960, p. 95.
8. See Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism,* Minneapolis, The University of Minnesota Press, 1982, p. xiv ff.
9. Dewey, 'The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy' in T*he Philosophy of John Dewey*, edited by John J. McDermott, New York, Capricorn Books, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1973, 2 vols., vol. 1, p. 95.
10. *Ibid.* p. 96.
11. For the following, see Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1957, Chapters II, III, *passim.*
12. *Ibid.* p. xxiii.
13. John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, New York, Capricorn Books, 1958, p. 128.
14. John Dewey, 'The Pattern of Inquiry', in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, edited by John J. McDermott, vol. 1, p. 226.
15. *Ibid.* p. 224.
16. *Ibid.* pp. 225-26.
17. John E. Smith, *Purpose and Thought, The Meaning of Pragmatism*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1978, p. 102.
18. *Ibid.* p. 109.
19. See Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964, pp. 10-34;

92-110.

20. See *Ibid.* p. 10.

21. See *Ibid.* p. 151.

22. See *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce,* vols. 1-6 edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss; vols. 7-8 edited by Arthur Burks, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1931-57, vol. 5, parpagraph 358 ff.; paragraph 407. See also the present writer's article, 'Peirce and "The Will to Believe"', in *The Monist,* vol. 63, #3, July 1980, pp. 342-350.

23. Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy,* edited by Lewis S. Feuer, New York, Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959, p. 245.

24. As quoted in Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 135. (Original source, *Rheinische Zeitung,* 14 July 1842).

25. *Loc. cit.*

26. *Ibid.* p. 136.

27. Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', in *Marx and Engels, Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy,* edited by Lewis S. Feuer, p. 243.

28. Karl Marx, 'A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy', in *Marx and Engels, Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy,* edited by Lewis S. Feuer, p. 43.

29. *Loc. cit.*

30. Avineri, *op. cit.,* pp. 68-71.

31. *Ibid.* p. 68.

32. *Ibid.* p. 72.

33. *Ibid.* pp. 74-75.

34. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe,* in William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism and A Pluralistic Universe,* Gloucester, Peter Smith, 1967, p. 60.

35. *The Philosophy of John Dewey,* edited by John J. McDermott, vol. 1, p. 267, footnote.

36. For an explication of the term "quasi-chaos" see Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Chaos and Context, A Study in William James,* Athens, Ohio University Press, 1978, pp. 46-48.

37. William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism, op. cit.,* p. 87.

38. Avineri, *op. cit.,* p. 69.

39. Tom W. Goff, *Marx and Mead, Contributions to a Sociology of Knowledge,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 48.

40. *Ibid.* pp. 48-49.

41. For an excellent article contrasting Dewey and Marx on the

issue of partisanship, see Alfonso J. Damico, 'Dewey and Marx, On Partisanship and the Reconstruction of Society', *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 75, #3, 1981, pp. 654-666.

42. For the debate between "critical Marxists" and "scientific Marxists" see Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms*, New York, The Seabury Press, 1980, *passim*, but especially Part One.

43. Apel, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-96.

44. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, translated with an introduction by Alan Bass, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 292.

45. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, p. 158.

46. *Ibid.* p. 167.

47. Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, translated by David Allison, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973, pp. 142-43.

48. Richard Rorty, 'Philosophy as a Kind of Writing, An Essay on Derrida', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 103.

49. Michael Ryan, *Marxism and Deconstruction*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982, p. 12.

50. *Ibid.* p. 21.

51. *Ibid.* p. 46.

52. *Ibid.* p. 47.

53. *Ibid.* p. 48.

54. *Ibid.* p. 83.

55. *Ibid.* p. 100.

56. Cf. *Ibid.* p. 221.

57. *Ibid.* p. 38.

58. *Ibid.* p. 214.

59. Cf. *Ibid.* p. 36.

60. For an expanded treatment of this theme, see the present author's article, 'James and Deconstruction, What Difference does *Différance* Make?', in *Soundings*, Vol. LXVIII, #4, Winter 1985, pp. 537-559.

61. Richard Rorty, 'Pragmatism, Relativism and Irrationalism', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 164.

62. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 6.

63. Richard Rorty, 'Philosophy in America Today', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, pp. 213-14.

64. Richard Rorty, 'Dewey's Metaphysics', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 73.

65. *Ibid.* p. 87.

66. Richard Rorty, 'Pragmatism, Relativism, and Irrationalism', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 166.
67. *Ibid.* p. 167.
68. *Ibid.* p. 172.
69. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1958, p. 40. Emphasis mine.
70 William James, *Pragmatism*, New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1908, pp. 296-98.
71. Richard Rorty, 'Pragmatism, Relativism, and Irrationalism', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 174.
72. William James, *Pragmatism, op. cit.*, p. 295.
73. Richard Rorty, 'Method, Social Science, and Social Hope', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 208.
74. *Ibid.* pp. 206-207.
75. Richard Rorty, 'Introduction: Pragmatism and Philosophy', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. xxi.
76. *Ibid.* p. xxx.
77. Cf. above, p. 10.
78. For an extended treatment of James' 'realist' metaphysics, see the present author's article, 'James' Metaphysics: Language as the House of 'Pure Experience'', *Man and World* Vol. 12, #2, 1979, pp. 142-159.
79. As quoted in Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 'Introduction: Pragmatism and Philosophy', p. xxxi. (Original source, Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. xii.)
80. Cf. p. 46, above, and footnote #1.

PART II

THE CULTURAL/POLITICAL CONTEXT

GARRY M. BRODSKY

Politics, Culture and Society in Marx and Dewey

It is tempting to contrast the socio-political philosophies of Marx and Dewey as, respectively, foundationalist and non-foundationalist. There are reasons for holding this view and we shall see that Dewey favors it. But I believe that on balance it does an injustice to Marx' philosophy. While it will not be possible to present adequate evidence for this and for holding that Marx like Dewey is ultimately a non-foundationalist, I will indicate the grounds upon which this case should be built. At the end of the paper I will also explain why I believe that the followers of Marx are well-advised to acknowledge and underscore the similarities between Marx and Dewey and vice versa. In the course of the paper I will discuss:

(1) the contrast between contextualism and foundationalism and the closely related contrast between modernity and postmodernity;
(2) the foundationalist interpretation of Marx' philosophy;
(3) the contextualist character of Dewey's general outlook and the ways in which this makes itself felt in his somewhat radical socio-political position;
(4) the points upon which Dewey and Marx agree and Dewey's criticisms of Marxism; and
(5) the grounds for holding that, Dewey notwithstanding, Marx' outlook is contextualist.

We can begin by considering the suggestion that the most important differences in Marx' and Dewey's treatments of politics, culture and society are traceable to the fact that Dewey's philosophy is contextualist while Marx' philosophy is foundationalist. To pursue this approach is to argue that while Marx holds that there are data upon which to base apodictically certain, ahistorical conclusions about the socio-political world which are the foundations for all else that we can securely know about it[1], Dewey denies this and insists that the most that even the best situated inquirer can hope to do is arrive at conclusions which are warrantably assertible within certain limits. Recently, this has been expressed in terms of the contrast between modernity and post-modernity and I believe it is worthwhile to avail ourselves of this way of formulating the distinction. So, following Lyotard, we can identify modernity with the view that philosophy yields meta-scientific discourses which legitimate the procedures and conclusions of the various special sciences.[2] Such discourses make

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> an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth.[3]

Further, if the grand - or as I shall also refer to it - meta-narrative employed to legitimate knowledge implies a philosophy of history, then it will deal with socio-political questions which concern the validity of political institutions and thus consign justice "to the grand narrative in the same way as truth".[4] While Lyotard does not explicitly refer to efforts to legitimate political institutions and policies by appealing to natural rights or by exploiting the idea of the social contract (as Rawls has done), these efforts obviously fall well within the tradition of modernity. For they also are motivated by the Enlightenment conviction that there are truths which all rational people can apprehend and ends and means of action which they all can perceive as just and desirable. To think otherwise and look upon such meta-narratives with incredulity is to be in the postmodern condition[5], and believe that it is futile to appeal to "the dialectic of Spirit" or to consensus or even to "the emancipation of humanity as a validation for postmodern scientific discourse".[6] Foucault characterizes this condition when he writes: "It was Nietzsche, in any case, who burned for us, even before we were born, the intermingled promises of the dialectic and anthropology."[7] Obviously, the situation Foucault adumbrates is not one in which all beliefs and policies are of equal value and validity. Rather, it is one marked by the absence of something - the theoretical representation of a fully and coherently actualized human nature by reference to which different, competing, mutually contradictory theories and policies can be judged. While it may be argued that we should lament this, it is also possible to follow Rorty and relish being in the postmodern condition. If we do this, we

> regain Hegel's sense of cultures and languages as matching themselves against past and future cultures and languages rather than against such extra-human forces as God, the moral law, or 'the real world.' This sense of ourselves as engaged in a process of reweaving our beliefs and desires rather than trying to bring these into conformity with something else lets us reappropriate Schiller's sense of play as the highest possibility for human life.[8]

With this account of modernity/foundationalism and postmodernity/contextualism in place it is rather easy to sketch an interpretation of Marx' philosophy as foundationalist. For it can be pointed out that Marx' writings are not of a piece. To the contrary, in the corpus of his works we find political and polemical tracts, historical studies, works

which are putatively scientific and critical, and creative texts which are incontestably philosophical. Taken together, the two latter kinds of works appear to present what Lyotard refers to as a 'grand narrative', a philosophy of history apparently authored by someone able to perceive its mechanisms and its essential shape and direction. Evidently, these works provide the foundations for Marx' other more particular works and for Marxist revolutionary politics. They (especially *Capital*) provide Louis Althusser with the grounds for claiming that Marxism occupies a special, privileged place on the contemporary theoretical and political scene. For

> Marx established a new science: the science of the history of 'social formations' ... Marx 'opened up' for scientific knowledge a new 'continent', that of history. ... [9]

Indeed, what Marx did is on a par with what Thales and Galileo[10] did. And for this reason, Marxism is radically different from the subjectivist philosophical views which

> have compromised it or threaten it: above all, empiricism and its variants, classical and modern - pragmatism, voluntarism, historicism.[11]

The scientific character of Marxism accounts for the "revolutionary specificity of Marxist theory" and allows it to play a special role in the "Revolutionary class struggle".[12] Bluntly, Althusser's claim is that because the Marxist has a scientific theory he can fashion practical policies grounded in a kind of knowledge not available to others. He can employ objective knowledge while they can rely only on their subjective volitions.

In view of its unpretentious, modest tone, its frequent self-conscious appeals to clearly identified empirical and fallible scientific conclusions and its critical character, Dewey's philosophy does not easily lend itself to being construed as foundationalist. Instead of claiming to have formulated a philosophical science or super-science, Dewey attacks the view that philosophy is a science whose aim is to reveal the character of transcendental reality. Following James, he asserts that its proper function is not to rival the special sciences but "to free men from bias and prejudice and to enlarge their perceptions of the world about them".[13] He presents this position via an account of the emergence of philosophy in Greece. Before philosophy arose there existed two types of beliefs which came increasingly into conflict with one another, religious and poetic beliefs on the one hand and, on the other hand, empirical and practical beliefs, "the prosaic matter of fact

knowledge" forthcoming from craftsmen and manual workers.[14] Dewey goes on to contend:

> ... while all the advantages of what we call science were on the side of the latter, the advantages of social esteem and authority, and of what gives life its deeper lying values were on the side of traditional belief.[15]

What is more, the religious and poetic beliefs were "in keeping of a higher class directly associated with the ruling elements of society".[16] Philosophy responded to this conflict by developing a method of "investigation and proof" which defended and purified those poetic and religious beliefs which had formerly been accepted on the authority of custom by grounding them in reason and in a metaphysical account of reality.[17] Until recently, this origin has exercised a controlling influence upon the conception of the function of philosophy, and hence even when philosophy was critical it remained essentially conservative and even apologetic. This can be seen in Plato and Aristotle, the medievals, as well as

> ...in the early nineteenth century, when Hegel assumed the task of justifying in the name of rational idealism the doctrines and institutions which were menaced by the new spirit of science and popular government.[18]

This origin can also be seen in the attachment of philosophy to "system for its own sake"[19] and in the emphasis on "abstract definition and ultra-scientific argumentation".[20] Because philosophy set out to replace a pervasive communal tradition, it had itself to advance a pervasive, global vision of things, and because it undertook the task of convincing people of the truth of doctrines which they no longer accepted on the grounds of authority and which are not subject to empirical verification, it had "no recourse save to magnify the signs of rigorous thought and rigid demonstration".[21] The practical conclusion Dewey draws from this is not that philosophy should cease to deal with the area of life governed by the deep-lying values originally expressed in poetry and religion. Rather, it is that the history of philosophy will take on a "new significance" if we read or 'decode' it as an arena in which rival conceptions of social purpose rather than rival views of ultimate reality clash.[22] This also will help philosophy cease to be conservative and apologetic. Most importantly, it will enable future philosophers to see that the task of the discipline is

> to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own

> day ... (and) become as far as is humanly possible an organ for dealing with these conflicts.[23]

This sketch of Dewey's view of the history and nature of philosophy clearly indicates that his philosophical predilections are anti-foundationalist. But, is his position as free of foundationalist (or, as was said at another time, metaphysical) features as Dewey and his post-modernist or contextualist followers think?[24] Can it not be argued that while Dewey does not advance a Hegelian or Marxist meta-narrative, spelling out how Spirit realizes itself or why a classless society must come to exist, his account of the origins and character of philosophy is a meta-narrative and it together with his theory of inquiry implies that the methods and procedures of the empirical sciences (be they natural or social) and only these methods and procedures yield knowledge? The reply to the first of these objections is that Dewey's account of the origins of philosophy is clearly not intended to replace the Hegelian or Marxist grand narrative with another superior one of the same kind, but to show that we go wrong in thinking that it is possible or desirable to formulate such narratives in the first place. In other words, Dewey's efforts in this regard are not constructive but deconstructive. As for Dewey's theory of inquiry, it is, of course, true that it is designed to show that the procedures (or methods) employed in arriving at beliefs in the sciences are intellectually authoritative and hence are the only ones we can know to be productive of warrantably assertible conclusions.[25] But it is also contextualistic and postmodern. For it does not claim that the authority of science is established by showing that our bodies of scientific beliefs and practices rest upon the apprehension of neutral objects which all rational people can inspect. Rather, Dewey believes that the authority (or authoritativeness) of science derives from the fact that it is an essentially self-corrective enterprise committed to making plain how its conclusions are arrived at and how they compare with other rival views. Most importantly, for Dewey, by virtue of being experimental, science self-consciously aims at generating data which can bring about the revision of our beliefs in the light of novel external materials.[26]

It is not difficult to understand why Dewey makes as much of this feature of scientific inquiry as he does. For holding the non-foundational view that inquiry has no privileged starting points and no substantive principles of rationality by which to test its conclusions and refusing to employ a meta-narrative to justify preferred bodies of knowledge on the grounds that they conform to reality or reflect the march of history, he has little choice but to appeal to the experimental moment in science as an antidote to thorough-going epistemological relativism. Putting this in terms which are more consistent with the

way in which Dewey himself speaks of it and does not represent his stress upon scientific experimentation as a desperate means of defending his epistemology against charges of subjectivism, once the experimental moment in science is recognized, it is clear that it (and the quasi-moral, quasi-intellectual virtues of open-mindedness and flexibility) is a useful means for discovering truths and combatting errors and prejudices. Hence, it is not necessary to attempt to achieve such ends by other more grandiose and notoriously unsuccessful means.

The contention that Dewey is a thorough-going contextualist can also be challenged on the grounds that he devotes a good deal of attention to attacking dualistic, transcendental and rationalistic philosophies and to formulating a philosophical outlook which is non-dualistic and naturalistic. But the outlook Dewey formulates is not presented as a vision of how things look to an observer whose view of things is, happily, freed of contextualistic limitations, and its content does not lend itself to decontextualist, foundationalist purposes. Of course, Dewey tries to show that human experience is not cut off from nature but, to the contrary, "is a means of penetrating continually further into the heart of nature".[28] He also describes at some length the generic features of human experience.[29] But the features he emphasizes are the ones we should expect to find emphasized by a contextualist. So, experience is composed of limited histories unified by particular qualities; it is set within horizons; it is at once precarious and stable; it is continuous with and somewhat isolated from what surrounds and impinges upon it; it is plastic but not wholly so, *etc.* Now if, experience as thus described is ultimately real and not, *e.g.*, the way it appears under conditions of highly imperfect knowledge, then it is not possible to achieve the kind of security and certainty sought by philosophers who have attempted to provide foundations for knowledge and meta-narratives within which we are to situate ourselves and determine our socio-political policies. But this does not imply that our position as either practical political agents or theoretical inquirers is an untenable or even an unattractive one. For once we realize that the epistemological and moral problems which could only be solved by uncovering foundations or producing meta-narratives are themselves grounded in untenable views of the nature of human experience, we can better appreciate the existing and perfectly respectable means we have to achieve relative security by weaving and reweaving the fabric of our beliefs and desires.[30]

The contextualist interpretation of Dewey's philosophy can also be challenged on the ground that it overlooks the fact that Dewey's frequent appeals to science reveal his belief that science itself can provide the foundations for our culture and politics and that it contains or can

easily come up with a grand narrative describing our present state and the path our history can and should follow. So, it may be held that according to Dewey we find in science the values and knowledge needed to replace the values and beliefs which were discredited at the beginning of modern history and that all we need to do is apply science to our contemporary situation. But this is not Dewey's position. Writing in 1948, Dewey expresses this with power and compactness when he asserts: "The genuinely modern has still to be brought into existence."[31] As this remark indicates, his complaint is not that we have failed to 'apply' science to the solution of any number of our problems. For he knows we have done this and, while he is aware of the evils to which science can be and has been put[32], he also insists that science has been a profoundly liberating phenomenon.[33] Nevertheless, Dewey contends that until the present, the application of the novel methods and results of science

> has influenced the means of life rather than its ends; or better put, that human aims have so far been affected in an accidental rather than an intelligently directed way, signifies that so far the change has been technical rather than moral, that it has been economic rather than social.[34]

As this text indicates, Dewey does not look to science for values which already exist and which we need only adopt and employ. For his claim is that such values do not exist. But it might be pointed out that he holds that science has a distinctive ethos by virtue of stressing communication, experimentation and change.[35] Since, as is well-known, he repeatedly calls for the adoption of this ethos in all areas of human life, it may appear plausible to suggest that this is the moral rather than the technical change which he hopes will be forthcoming from the influence of science. But even so, it is important to insist that this kind of ethos or broad-tracked attitude should not be confused with a meta-narrative or body of foundations. For the fact that it occupies the place and plays the role of foundations and meta-narratives in the lives of some people should not be permitted to obscure the marked differences between this ethos and a body of foundations.

Nor will it do to argue that since Dewey repeatedly looks to the natural sciences to play a large role in the reconstruction of the human worlds of morality, culture and politics, he thinks that the natural sciences can serve as foundations for the social or human sciences. For this may lead us to think that Dewey believes that there are no significant differences between the natural and the human sciences or that he believes that we have not made use of 'the scientific method' employed to great effect in the natural sciences when dealing with the

problems in the area of the human sciences despite the fact that the method in question is clearly applicable to these problems. But Dewey holds neither of these views. After remarking that the term "intelligence" can serve as

> a shorthand designation for great and ever-growing methods of observation, experiment and reflective reasoning which have in a very short time revolutionized the physical and, to a considerable degree, the physiological conditions of life ... [36]

he goes on to claim that these methods "have not as yet been worked out for application to what is itself distinctively and basically human".[37] So the problem is not that we have not put to use a method we already have, but that we have not as yet developed the method we need. Nor, turning to the former point, is it difficult to understand why Dewey holds this view. For he believes that there are two kinds of facts. One of these is dealt with by mathematics and the natural sciences, disciplines whose subject-matter is made up of items which are as they are "independent of human desire and endeavor ... ".[38] The other kind of fact "to some extent" is as it is because "of human interest and purpose" and items of this kind are subject to alteration when the interests, purposes, and judgments of people change.[39] Dewey believes that this difference is of the utmost importance, as the following passage indicates.

> The more sincerely we appeal to facts, the greater is the importance of the distinction between facts which condition human activity and facts which are conditioned by human activity. In the degree which we ignore this difference, social science becomes pseudo-science.[40]

This and the preceding points should make it clear that Dewey looks to science as an ethos and as a resource to be explored and developed, and not as a source of readily available solutions to the problems of the life-world or of foundations for its values.

In turning from Dewey's general philosophical scheme to his treatment of the socio-political world, it is again helpful to stress his contextualism. For Dewey approaches socio-political questions in a manner which is quite reminiscent of the contextualist account he advanced of moral life and moral inquiry. According to that account, living the moral life and engaging in moral inquiries at the level of the personal and the intimate consists in undergoing experiences in which one's already existing ideals and standards of behavior emerge as inadequate, problematic and in conflict with one another and in which

one is called upon to refashion these values and, perhaps, devise new ones which answer the question, 'What kind of a person do I want to become?'[41] Now the same points hold true of life at the socio-cultural level when individuals and communities confront similar questions about themselves. As this suggests, Dewey thinks that at both the individual and social levels the serious problems we confront are not ones in which our difficulty primarily concerns how we are to preserve and apply values which we do not find problematic in relatively novel contexts. Equally important, he does not hold that the situations in question are ones in which value-free, non-moral materials are somehow to be brought within the purview of moral and/or socio-political values. Nor, finally, does Dewey hold that these are situations in which all our antecedent values have become equally and completely problematic so that we must, as Nietzsche had it, engage in the transvaluation of all values or, as those who invoke doctrines of natural rights believe, attempt to provide foundations for an entire enterprise. To the contrary, Dewey's general position is that as we live our moral and socio-political lives, we find ourselves in specific situations in which we cannot live satisfactorily while continuing to accept those values making up the *status quo ante*. What formerly worked for us no longer does.

These are the situations which call for moral inquiry - that complex activity involving factual studies, the reflective and analytic examination of some of the values we held at the time things became problematic, the formulation of new values and value configurations and, finally, various efforts to determine 'experimentally' how satisfactory new proposed value configurations are. It is important to underscore the fact that as these situations develop, some values emerge as questionable while other values continue to be accepted and even cherished and thus play vital roles as we analyze the problematic situation in which we find ourselves and attempt to formulate new values to resolve the situation. Perhaps we should also observe that while our schematic account of moral inquiry may suggest that Dewey thinks he has described a mechanical step-wise procedure we should follow when dealing with our moral problems, it is far more reasonable to hold that Dewey has sought to identify a general style of moral thinking and the elements of that style and not the mechanical means to produce works in it.

Because Dewey views our moral and socio-political conditions in this general way, the works in which he formulates his socio-political vision are, while general and philosophical, deliberately topical, non-systematic, analytic, frankly political and modest.[42] He eschews the grand style of socio-political thought and instead writes works dealing with a body of more or less particular problems faced by a particular community at a particular time.[43]

The particular problems Dewey discusses are the ones which became acute in the U.S. during the late 1920s and the depression of the 1930s.[44] Of course, they are connected with advanced industrial capitalism, and while Dewey makes this clear, his discussion focusses upon their character and significance within American society. Hence he deals both with the salient features of the American political and economic scene during this period and with the current values of American people. As we have already indicated, this reflects the contextualistic style of his thought and his conviction that the facts of the life-world are partially constituted by the ways in which they are viewed and understood. Putting this last point in somewhat more general terms, Dewey thinks it is a mistake to isolate one factor, the economic one, and treat it "as the cause of all social change".[45] But he also thinks that the economic factor is an extremely important one in the life of a society and thus claims that his rejection of the position he ascribes to Marx is not

> ... aimed at denying the role of economic factors in society nor at denying the tendency of the present economic regime to produce consequences adverse to democratic freedom.[46]

He grants also that

> ... if there is to be a genuine and adequate democracy there must be a radical transformation of the present controls of production and distribution of goods and services ... [47]

He even goes so far as to contend: "Economic determinism is now a fact, not a theory."[48]

Dewey's remark about economic determinism might be taken as evidence that he overlooks the distinction he himself draws between the economic determinist's view that economic factors are the causes of all political and legal changes and the less extreme view that economic factors play an important role in bringing about such changes. But it is far more sensible to construe it as the claim that economic factors play so large a role in human life that we cannot put them to one side when we reflect seriously about the kind of society in which we wish to live and the kinds of human beings we wish to find in that society. This is an obvious corollary of the central thesis of *Individualism Old and New* and, I believe, of Dewey's social and political philosophy as a whole, namely, that modern, corporate industrial capitalism forces us to modify our idea of the nature of human individuality and to modify the way in which our economy operates in the light of this more adequate

understanding of human individuality.[49]

Dewey's argument for this thesis does not consist of a series of steps each of which is formally deduced from the preceding steps or is a premise which can be accepted without grounds or arguments. Rather, it is like a mosaic whose separate parts lend weight and significance to one another and together make up a single coherent whole. One important piece of the mosaic consists of a summary of such obvious facts of economic life as that there are vast disparities in the distribution of wealth in the U.S.[50] and, even more significantly, that "The most marked trait of present life, economically speaking is insecurity." Dewey speaks of this insecurity as "tragic" and connects it with the existence of permanently and cyclically unemployed people[51], and with the anxiety which many people feel when looking towards old age.[52]

A second, obviously more theoretical piece in this mosaic is made up of progressively more general critical analyses of some basic American socio-political ideas and traditions. So, Dewey examines the idea of individualism in the U.S., arguing that while we have moved from a condition of "earlier pioneer individualism to a condition of dominant corporateness"[53], we still construe individualism as pioneer individualism thus identifying it "with ideas of initiative and invention that are bound up with private and exclusive economic gain".[54] Part of the reason for this is that the roots of our "moral culture" are located in the pre-scientific, pre-technological values and ideas of the feudal period and of medieval religion.[55] Now if our idea of the nature of the human is ultimately grounded in the idea of something as non-social and non-temporal as a soul, and if our conception of property and reward is modelled on "the static property concepts of feudalism", then the notion Dewey attacks has a good deal of plausibility.[56]

Dewey also claims that when these ideas became somewhat outmoded during the industrial revolution, the Protestant version of them, which fused doctrines of natural rights with ideas of individual capitalism and merit, had the function of seeking to "release from legal restrictions man's wants and his efforts to satisfy these wants".[57] And when they took the romantic form of pioneer individualism, they again had some validity and viability. For the pioneer did face the problem of mastering the forces of physical nature by himself and it made perfectly good sense to stress those characteristics - strength, hardiness, physical heroism - which made for success in those circumstances and even to identify them with individuality as such.[58] But these conditions no longer obtain and to think that the virtues and rewards which are appropriate in them constitute the essence of human individuality

> ... ignores the fact that the mental and moral structure of individuals, the pattern of their desires and purposes, change with

every great change in social constitution.[59]

The same ideas and strategies are found in Dewey's critical reconstruction of liberalism. This reconstruction is grounded in the idea that liberalism has the capacity to help us bring about "radical social changes"[60] and that to exploit this capacity we must free liberalism from "one adventitious idea" that played a large role in the later incapacitation of liberalism.[61] The idea in question is that liberty, individuality, and intelligence are immutable. The early liberals held this because they "lacked historic sense and interest".[62] They failed to realize that the ideas and policies which they advocated and which were at one time bound up with liberating individuals from the existing arbitrary and inequitable socio-economic order would, at another time and under different circumstances, sanction only formal liberty and provide support for institutions and practices which prevent the realization of desired liberal goals.[63] If the liberals possessed an historic sense

> ... they would have recognized that effective liberty is a function of the social conditions existing at any time. If they had done this, they would have known that as economic relations became dominantly controlling forces in setting the pattern of human relations, the necessity of liberty for the individuals which they proclaimed will require social control of economic forces in the interest of the great mass of individuals.[64]

Dewey also claims that the psychology of the early liberals was profoundly inadequate. For it construed individuality as "something ready-made" when it is, in fact, "a moving thing, something that is attained only by continuous growth".[65] This error led them to underestimate and misunderstand the role of social conditions in the life of the individual. For if individuality is ready-made then social conditions will either allow or impede the expression of something which, as Dewey observes, needs "only the removal of certain legal restrictions to come into full play".[66] But this obscures the fact that individuals depend upon social conditions which enter, in significant ways, "into the internal make-up and growth of individuals".[67]

Despite these criticisms of liberalism, Dewey does not situate himself outside the liberal tradition. Rather, he draws a distinction between the views just mentioned and the enduring values of liberalism.

> These values are liberty; the development of the inherent capacities of individuals made possible through liberty, and the central role of free intelligence in inquiry, discussion and expression.[68]

Obviously, the force of his point lies in the claim that the liberal who would be faithful to what is essential in the position must favor social and political policies which control the forces which prevent vast numbers of people from developing their capacities and thus keep free intelligence, *etc.*, from playing a vital role in the determination of social policies.

We can introduce a third complex and extremely important piece in this mosaic by observing that before Dewey can claim to have shown that political control should be exercised over the economy he must demonstrate the untenability of the theory that the state (or the legitimate or moral state) is extremely limited in the powers it may exercise and must function like a night watchman and do little more than keep the internal peace and protect its citizens against attack by foreign powers.[69] Otherwise the issues we just broached are moot. Again, if legitimate states are obligated to respect the natural rights of their citizens - amongst which are the rights to function as free economic agents and to keep their property and their earnings - then they must not regulate their economies even if substantial benefits would be forthcoming were they to do so. This view of the state is a long-standing and popular one (especially in the U.S.) and thus it is easy to understand why Dewey devotes as much attention to it as he does.[70]

While Dewey rejects the libertarian theory of the state, it is important to realize that he is deeply sympathetic to the libertarian aim of limiting the power and scope of the state. In fact, Dewey's attitude towards the state is deflationary. It represents "an important although distinctive and restricted social interest" which is "not all absorbing and inclusive, (and) is under some circumstances the most idle and empty of social arrangements".[71] Hence all associations should not be 'monopolistically' absorbed into the state and all social values should not be construed as political values.[72] For this leads to the absurd view that such people as Socrates, Buddha, Homer, Newton *et al.*, all of whom profoundly influenced society, were officers of the state.[73] Nor is Dewey sympathetic to the various metaphysical views which attempt to explain the existence of the state and not only glorify it, but turn our attention away from the body of facts which are readily available to observation and which can be employed to support a theory enabling us to see that the state is limited and yet able to serve vital and not pre-defined human purposes.[74] So Dewey urges us to change our approach to this topic. For if we continue to ask how the state came into existence, we will invariably assume that prior to this individuals existed more or less in isolation and left this isolated state either by contracting with one another to live in a state or by being forced to accept the arbitrary, oppressive power of some one.

> Thus the state appears either a monster to be destroyed or a Leviathan to be cherished. In short, under the influence of the prime fallacy that the problem of the state concerns causal forces, individualism, as an ism, as a philosophy, has been generated.[75]

Dewey's alternative to this way of formulating the problem to be solved by a theory of the state consists of taking note of the fact that states do exist and considering "what is going on and how it goes on".[76] This differs from traditional views because it seeks to understand the state by considering the consequences of states and state actions rather than their causes.[77]

According to Dewey, we can understand what actions states perform and how they perform these actions by distinguishing between actions which are private and actions which are public. Actions which are public are ones producing significant indirect consequences affecting people who are not direct parties to the action, while actions which are private are largely limited in their consequences to the people directly involved in performing the action.[78] It should be pointed out immediately that this distinction does not rest on the difference between a social action (such as a game of tennis) and an action which a person performs alone. For there are any number of actions performed by groups of people which are private by virtue of having no indirect consequences affecting people who are not parties to the actions. Such actions can even include ones performed by small communities; although, as Dewey notes, as more people become involved in the action, it tends to become public.[79]

Further, actions performed by a single individual (such as blowing up a bridge, dropping poison into a reservoir, *etc.*) can be public by virtue of having indirect consequences affecting people who are not parties to the action. So what is of crucial importance in the distinction is not how many people are involved in performing an action but whether there are people who are not parties to the action who are affected by it in significant ways. If such people exist, then the action is public and it may be appropriate for them to take steps to exercise control over it. Such actions can also be said to bring about the existence of a public, *i.e.*, a group of individuals having a common interest which cannot be secured by their direct individual actions. To secure their interests the members of a public must organize themselves and appoint officials to act on their behalf. When this takes place, there exists a state.[80]

This theory of the state clearly implies that it is not by nature limited to settling conflicts between groups[81] or to protecting "individuals in the rights which were theirs by nature".[82] But can it not be argued that while the state may pursue positive as well as negative goals, it still

must not violate the natural property rights of its citizens and, hence, cannot legitimately do what Dewey believes must be done under current circumstances? Dewey's reply to this is found in his attack on the idea that there are natural rights[83], which, he claims, is bound up with 'individualism', the theory which

> ... endowed singular persons in isolation from any association, except those they deliberately formed for their own ends, with native or natural rights. [84]

Dewey argues that once we see the position in its historical setting it becomes obvious both that the theory has no justification and that many of the theoretical ideas and practical goals of individualism can be defended without appeal to the doctrine of natural rights. For individualism arose during the revolt against oppressive institutional forms of political and ecclesiastical authority and provided the intellectual justification for this revolt and for restricting the powers and actions of these institutional bodies by arguing that their legitimate powers derive from the "prior non-political rights inherent in the very structure of the individual".[85] But to show that the legitimate powers of governments are restricted it is not necessary to appeal to the existence of individuals as "independent and isolated" and completely fitted with a battery of ahistorical inalienable rights.[86] It suffices "to assert that some primary groupings had claims which the state could not legitimately encroach upon".[87]

Dewey's effort to discredit the thesis that the legitimate authority of the state is limited by an obligation not to infringe upon the natural economic rights of individuals also directs our attention to the fact that within this theory 'nature' functions as the source of moral and political authority which operates to secure the "harmony of personal profit and social benefit".[88] According to it, individuals are moved by their desires for happiness to act in the economic marketplace in their own interests.

> Wealth and security are the natural rewards of economic virtues. At the same time, the industry, commercial zeal, and ability of individuals contribute to the social good. Under the invisible hand of a beneficent providence which has framed natural laws, work, capital and trade operate harmoniously to the advantage of men collectively and individually. The foe to be dreaded is interference of government.[89]

Under these circumstances, the only function left for government is to prevent "the idle and shiftless" from appropriating the property of the

industrious; for this is not only unjust but it frustrates the purposes of nature. Further, as Dewey observes, it would, according to this theory, also frustrate the purposes of nature and be unjust if the state were to appropriate the property of the industrious and distribute it to those without property.[90]

While conceding that the movement this position champions had some beneficial effects by virtue of releasing some human potentialities, stimulating initiative and planning and emancipating people from old habits, rules and institutions, Dewey points out that it also caused a great deal of suffering among the poor[91] and that it produced conditions enabling its partisans, the new class of business men, to use government agencies for their own purposes.[92] As a matter of historical fact, then, 'nature' was not as beneficent as the theory leads one to believe and people who held the theory were not content to leave things in 'nature"s hands when given the opportunity to do otherwise. In addition, Dewey attacks the individualistic underpinnings of the theory. He argues that according to the theory the free expression of the native capacities and desires of individuals takes precedence over the artificial arrangements of law and custom because these desires and capacities are natural. But Dewey claims that the capacities and desires which the theory must identify as natural in order to show that governments overstep their legitimate powers when they regulate the economy are not, in fact, natural in the sense required by the theory. For all we can ascribe to individuals apart from the numerous ways in which their behavior is a function of taking place in a socio-cultural setting are "organic needs" for "food, protection and mates" and the "innate structures" enabling them to satisfy these needs.[93] But these needs and structures are far too meager and primitive to account for the behavior which the individualist wishes to protect from government regulation, and any such needs (or as Dewey insinuates, wants) which can account for this behavior in part reflect the influence of socio-cultural settings in which they are found. Hence they are not natural.

No doubt the desires and preferences (for personal wealth, *etc.*) which, according to economic individualism, account for the behavior of businessmen and entrepreneurs and lead to public welfare benefits appear to be natural or, as we might say, simply or only natural. But they are not found in all cultures and periods and hence are as much a product of socio-cultural phenomena as the 'artificial' regulations which the individualist wishes to remove from the economic scene. We may fail to realize this because we overlook the fact that the particular, singular values of a community are frequently not experienced as particular and singular. Rather they are felt in the lives of the people making up the community as the desires which all people naturally have and so they seem uniquely privileged. But they are not desires all

people naturally have and they do not merit special status, and questions dealing with which activities should and which should not be subject to government regulation should be determined on their merits and not by appeal to how things were in the state of nature or how they are *qua* purely natural.[94]

Let me begin to bring this discussion of Dewey's social and political philosophy to a head by observing that there are a number of somewhat radical features of Dewey's thought. Its generally historicist, post-modern character is one of these. Another is found in Dewey's attacks on the prominent individualist philosophies. A third one can be identified with his effort to formulate a positive account of human individuality which makes clear its social character. It might even be argued that at the time Dewey was writing the attempt to justify political intervention in the economy and thus provide a general philosophical justification for the policies of the modern welfare state was radical. Be that as it may, I now want to try to show that Dewey's social and political philosophy amounts to much more than a pragmatic defense of the welfare state. We shall see that Dewey made rather deep criticisms of modern industrial capitalism and envisioned a society fundamentally different from the one which now exists.

Evidence for this interpretation can be found in Dewey's contention that even if the term "socialism" is not used to describe the form our economy will take, the economy will in fact be socialistic; although, it is not yet clear whether we shall live under public socialism or capitalistic socialism.[95] Dewey indicates that an economy characterized as capitalist socialism would be one:

(1) which is subject to some political control;
(2) which is run along lines primarily designed to secure pecuniary gain; and
(3) in which no major re-distribution of wealth takes place.

This kind of economy can come about because some political control of the economy in our mass industrial society is unavoidable and because capitalists themselves are coming increasingly to realize this and thus to recognize the need to distribute wealth so that an increasingly large and miserable proletariat does not come into existence.[96] Obviously it can be called capitalist because it serves the general purposes of capitalism and capitalists. But why does Dewey use the term "socialism" in describing it? The answer, I believe, is that Dewey is being ironic. For at the time he wrote, opponents of government efforts to regulate the economy or assist the poor labelled these programs "socialism", thus exploiting the negative connotations the term evoked in the popular American mind. They thought that once they succeeded in doing this they demonstrated the undesirability of a program. Dewey, however, insists that, as these people themselves

realize, some measure of 'socialism' is necessary to preserve the basically capitalistic economy which they favor and which favors them. It is also plausible to think that Dewey would view the modern welfare state as an example of this kind of economy and thus insist that it is an instance of capitalistic socialism. This also suggests that we do Dewey's position an injustice if we treat it as no more than an argument favoring the welfare state, motivated by a compassionate understanding of the unjust position of the poor.

We can carry this discussion further by observing that Dewey's somewhat odd use of the term "socialism" reflects a second deeper thesis which concerns the significance of socialism itself. What is noteworthy here is that Dewey challenges such views as that socialism is opposed to the growth of industrial consolidation and that it favors the use of political means to achieve an egalitarian distribution of wealth, or what Dewey refers to as "a kind of arithmetically fractionalized individualism".[97] The former contention is obviously true. But what of the latter one? As a description of historical fact, it is controversial if not false. But instead of treating it as a remark about what socialists themselves have held, we may also interpret it as a claim about what is important in the position. Still, socialism is so intimately connected with the view that some measure of economic egalitarianism should obtain and that capital goods should not be privately owned that it is hard to see what else can be important in the position and thus hard to see how this line of interpretation makes Dewey's position any more plausible. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that Dewey objects to the existence of wide disparities in the distribution of wealth. So if he does not stress this egalitarian moment in socialism, evidently this is not because he does not favor a society which is at least somewhat egalitarian. This suggests that he thinks socialism should be identified with something which is even more important than egalitarianism. Now it will not do to identify that with the political control of the economy; for as we saw, this can take the form of capitalistic socialism. Obviously something more is required and Dewey indicates what this is when he introduces the notion of public socialism and tells us that this kind of economy would be subjected to public, political control and would be run to achieve not "pecuniary profit" but "social values".[98] It would be an economy in which there would be serious "consideration of the ways in which a worthy and rich life for all may be achieved".[99]

It may be replied that Dewey's notion of public socialism fails to qualify as radical precisely because it fails to recognize the decisive importance of the question of the ownership of capital goods. But the counter-reply to this is that it should by now be amply clear that if an economy is not subject to genuinely public control and is not primarily directed towards securing "a worthy and rich life for all", then it may

combine public ownership of capital goods with the exploitation of the economy for the benefit of a small number of people. So the decisive question is not whether capital goods are publicly rather than privately owned. Rather it is whether the use of these goods is subject to public control. If it is not, then the economy can (and no doubt will) be operated in a manner which is much more like capitalism than anything socialists hoped to achieve. It is even possible to conceive of an economy in which socialism takes the form of what Dewey describes as "arithmetically fractionalized individualism". In such an economy capital goods would be commonly owned and the economy would be run to achieve pecuniary profit rather than a worthy and rich life for all. In this admittedly speculative and perhaps far-fetched case, what emerges in Dewey's condemnation of a form of socialism is his conviction that what is most important in socialism is not the goal of "sharing the wealth" but of running an economy in order to maximize the attainment of something other than wealth. Dewey explains what this can come to in the course of proposing an alternative to the capitalist goal of running an economy for private profit. It is commonly held that a free economy pursuing private profit will produce as many of the goods and services which consumers desire as cheaply as possible. But what is often overlooked is that an economy whose chief aim is to maximize private profit will also function to influence consumers to want those goods and services whose sale yields maximum profits. Once this is noticed, it should be clear that capitalism cannot be defended on the grounds that it serves the public good by innocently and industriously providing people with what they want. For as Dewey remarks, "Production for private profit signifies that any kind of consumption will be stimulated that leads to private gain".[100] The alternative to this sets "social utility" in the place of pecuniary profit.[101] The adoption of this alternative would be an "inevitable result" of a "co-operatively shared control of industry" in which "wage workers" would have a significant voice in determining the direction of industrial undertakings.[102] Under these conditions there would

> be the recognition of final use or consumption as the criterion of valuation, decision and direction. When the point of view of consumption is supreme in industry, the latter will be socialized, and I see no way of securing its genuine socialization save as industry is viewed and conducted from the standpoint of the user and enjoyer of services and commodities. For then human values will control economic values.[100]

A second important feature of the economic scheme which Dewey thinks should replace capitalism as we now know it concerns the share

which workers will have "in directing the activities in which they physically participate".[104] At present, as Dewey cleverly observes,

> The philosopher's idea of a complete separation of mind and body is realized in thousands of industrial workers, and the result is a depressed body and an empty and distorted mind.[105]

Nor is this result avoidable in an industrialized society in which most workers have no opportunity to exercise their mental capacities during a large part of their waking lives when they are occupied with what is clearly a central concern of their society. Dewey argues that if we are to have society made up of mature, stable individuals, then the people making up the society must have the opportunity to participate in its direction and to be responsible for what, after all, is a vital and pervasive part of their lives. And since our society is above all an industrial society, it is in just this area in which people today largely execute plans they do not formulate that these conditions must be made to obtain. Dewey puts these points in slightly different terms when he writes:

> We must wrest our general culture from an industrialized civilization; and this fact signifies that industry might itself become a primary educative and cultural force for those engaged in it.[106]

While the suggestion that industry should become an "educational and cultural force" may appear far-fetched and idealistic, it may seem less so if we take seriously Dewey's idea that the economy should aim at maximizing social utility and human values rather than private profits. For under such a regime, the value of a community or service will be determined on the basis of the gratifications involved in its use and its production. Under such circumstances the association of work with burdensome and often mindless drudgery will be broken and it will be plausible to expect it to provide many if not most people with the opportunities for growth and responsibility which it now offers a relatively small number of fortunate people.

Perhaps it will be replied that even if we find Dewey's vision of a non-capitalistic economic order attractive, we must still admit that it could hardly be as productive as capitalism. Dewey does not concede this point. For he claims that our technological resources have not functioned with freedom. Rather, technology

> ...has been confined and deflected at every point; it has never taken its own course. The engineer has worked in subordination to the business manager whose primary concern is not with wealth but

> with the interest of property as worked out in the feudal and semi-feudal period.[107]

Once we realize that it is one thing for an economy to produce wealth and another and different thing for it to produce the particular form of wealth identified with private property, it is hard to deny Dewey's point that under capitalism the wealth-producing resources of a society need not be and often are not fully exploited precisely because the aim of the society is not to produce wealth but to produce private property. This alone does not imply that some other kind of economy will out-produce capitalism. But it does neutralize a familiar argument in favor of capitalism and make clear one of the system's deep problems.

The points I have thus far made have, I hope, shown that Dewey's criticisms of capitalism are deep and fundamental and that the society which he hopes will replace it would differ from it in ways which are equally deep and fundamental. The remaining points I wish to make are intended to show that he was well aware of how deeply entrenched our capitalist society is and how difficult it will be to change it. So, Dewey does not think that we can cope with our current problems without making substantial changes in our basic social institutions, and he dismisses the idea that they should be traced to the "relaxation of traditional moral codes" with bemused contempt, claiming instead that the disintegration of traditional morality is tied to the disintegration of "modes of living" which resulted from new industrial and commercial conditions.[108] This should also clarify the character of Dewey's appeal to morality. For it indicates that while he obviously believes that *e.g.*, recounting and reconstructing the liberal and individualist traditions should result in the moral awareness of how unsatisfactory the current situation is, the response he hopes to achieve is not a resolution to be faithful to these moral traditions even in reconstructed form. Rather, it lies " ... in a humbler exercise of will to observe existing social realities and to direct them according to their own potentialities".[109] Dewey not only limits the role of morality in his argument, he also insists that it will not do to look to education and educational institutions as the sources of basic social and cultural changes. For "the distinguishing trait" of students in "higher schools" is, according to Dewey, "a kind of intellectual immaturity"[110] or, yet worse, "a kind of infantilism ..."[111] This immaturity reflects the fact that the schools have been prevented from "doing their educational work" by "the pressure--for the most part indirect to be sure--of domination by the money motif of our economic regime".[112] Consequently, Dewey contends, our educational system fails to deal seriously with "the deeper issues of social life"[113] and instead " ... merely turns out efficient industrial fodder and citizenship fodder in a state controlled by pecuniary industry ... "[114] Further, the

remedy for the situation Dewey describes does not consist in the schools becoming conscious of the indirect pressures to which they are subject; resisting these pressures; and proceeding to develop a curriculum which gives due weight to the deeper issues of social life. For the problem is deeper and more intractable than one which would respond to these remedies. It turns on the fact that schools

> ... are not the ultimate formative force. Social institutions, the trend of occupations, the pattern of social arrangements, are the finally controlling influences in shaping minds.[115]

Indeed Dewey tells us that one of the reasons he has focussed attention upon the schools is to underscore the fact that the educational influence of "economic and political institutions is, in the last analysis, even more important than their immediate economic consequences".[116] These institutions rather than the schools 'teach' people their fundamental beliefs and attitudes and for this reason to change the character of the lives of people we must concentrate on changing them rather than the schools.[117]

Nor, finally, does Dewey hold that the fundamental changes for which he calls will come about simply as the result of the normal electoral practices of political democracy. To the contrary, he claims that universal suffrage and representative government have not resulted in progress towards effecting them, and he goes so far as to quote with approval the following remark by Havelock Ellis:

> We see now that the vote and the ballot-box do not make the voter free from even external pressure; and, which is of much more consequence, they do not free him from his own slavish instincts.[118]

This is not to say that Dewey holds that political democracy is of little or no value. For, even if democracy as an ethical or social ideal is more inspiring than political democracy, as a matter of historical fact political democracy helped solve the problem of securing public officials with some competence to govern. Democratic election counteracts "the forces that have so largely determined the possession of rule by accidental factors"[119], which yield as rulers "old men and warriors, medicine men and priests" and members of dynasties.[120] It also helps counteract "the tendency to employ public power to serve private instead of public ends".[121] But Dewey does not think that political democracy alone will solve the larger problems with which he is dealing. For it enables the public to play a large role in the determination of governmental policies only if the public is aware of itself as a public, *i.e.*, only if individuals who share vital, common

interests realize this. And Dewey argues throughout *The Public and Its Problems* that this condition does not obtain as a result of the complex workings of our mass, industrial society. Consequently, "The public is so confused and eclipsed that it cannot even use the organs through which it is supposed to mediate political action and polity."[122] This accounts for the apathy, cynicism, lack of serious political discussions and significant choices which characterize modern American politics and it keeps democratic political processes, as we now know them, from making substantial contributions to the solutions of the problems which beset our society.[123]

This concludes my presentation of the major theses and convictions which are central to Dewey's social and political philosophy. While I doubt that there was ever any question about whether that philosophy is contextualistic and post-modern, I hope that spelling out Dewey's position in detail casts some light upon contextualism as a political stance or philosophy. With these materials in hand we can return to the question raised at the beginning of this essay and ask whether the positions of Marx and Dewey should be contrasted as foundationalist and contextualist. In dealing with this question, I will first state very briefly the obvious points of agreement between Marx and Dewey which provide the background for it. Next, I will summarize and comment upon some of Dewey's most important criticisms of Marx and Marxism and suggest that these criticisms are more apt as criticisms of versions of Marxism than of what Marx himself held. And, finally, I will explain why I believe that the partisans of Marx do very well to treat the work of Dewey as complementing rather than contradicting Marx' work and vice versa.

The first and most fundamental question which Marx and Dewey answer in very similar terms concerns the nature of social and political philosophy. Each holds that it is intrinsically bound up with changing the world. So each thinker not only believes that the socio-political world can and should and perhaps demands to be changed, but each also believes that he as a philosopher (and hence that philosophy itself) should be involved in changing the world. So even though Hegel taught Marx and Dewey a great deal, he did not persuade either of them to look upon the actual world with tolerance or to hold that philosophy has the task of bringing to self-consciousness the rationality inherent in things. We might better say that Marx and Dewey believe that the task of philosophy is to bring to self-consciousness the irrationality inherent in things. In addition, neither Marx nor Dewey subscribes to the more popular current position which maintains that philosophy should primarily concern itself with elucidating the logic of socio-political discourse or making clear the normative principles governing social life and politics. Rather, both thinkers devote themselves to formulating

and clarifying the cognitive and broadly construed, scientific instruments which will yield an understanding of the socio-political world facilitating our efforts to change it. Hence, each thinker is as critical of stances and epistemological theories which fail to make clear the practical moment in cognition as he is of the kind of dualism which makes action depend upon a moral will which is not grounded in the awareness of the potentialities of things. As Lukács points out, Marx is equally opposed to fatalism and voluntarism.[124] We can add that our summary of Dewey's position showed that he is thoroughly sympathetic to Marx' contention that "It is not enough that thought strive to actualize itself; actuality must itself strive toward thought."[125] So neither Marx nor Dewey writes as moralist. Rather - and allowing that there is a moral moment in each of their philosophies - each concentrates on making clear the directions in which, to use Marx' figure, actuality is striving.[126]

A second basic point upon which Marx and Dewey are largely in agreement concerns the plasticity of human nature. Of course this point raises issues which are broad and complex. But for present purposes it suffices to indicate that Dewey is sympathetic to the claims Marx makes in the sixth of the *Theses on Feuerbach*, where Marx contends that in resolving the religious essence of the human being into the human essence Feuerbach abstracts from social relations and historical processes and must presuppose "an abstract - isolated - human individual" and conceive essence as "internal dumb generality which naturally unites the many individuals".[127] He, on the other hand, contends that the human essence is not "an abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relationship."[128] In other words, his view is that the human essence is not so philosophically problematic an entity as an abstract, thing-like item found in each and every human being. Nor is it a timeless, asocial thing. Rather it should be identified with those basic, important, general features human beings have in common which are functions or manifestations of the social relationships binding them together. Understood in this way, the content thought in our idea of the human essence is far more concrete, specific, illuminating and detailed than would otherwise be the case and, equally important, it changes as the social and historical circumstances, in which human beings are found, change. We saw Dewey make very similar points when attacking the doctrine he labels 'individualism'. Further, for Dewey as for Marx, one profoundly important reason for stressing the plasticity of human nature and for relating what may appear at first to be natural features of human beings to the 'ensemble of the social relations' is that this is bound up with the contentions that fundamental changes in the ensemble of the social relations are not precluded by a body of

unchangeable, natural human dispositions and that making such fundamental changes in them can in turn bring about no less fundamental changes in human feelings and motives, or more broadly, the human essence.[129]

Thirdly, Marx and Dewey agree to a considerable extent in their visions of capitalism and modern capitalist society. Both recognize that capitalism is to be given a great deal of credit for creating "more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together".[130] And neither has any sympathy for the view that the reason capitalist economies have been so productive is that they function in accord with ahistorical 'natural laws' governing human behavior. For neither believes there are any such laws. Further, Dewey, like Marx, is deeply sensitive to the price which was paid and continues to be paid for capitalist productivity. Equally important, Marx and Dewey recognize that modern capitalism is not simply an economic system but a broad social system which affects virtually all the areas of the life of a society. So they insist that for capitalism to exist it is necessary that there exist the appropriate kind of property and property relations and the various institutions - legal and political as well as economic - which facilitate the possession, production and exchange of this kind of property. Less obviously, perhaps, Dewey and Marx share the view that the capitalist economic system can only exist as part of a pervasive culture in which people are trained to have the skills needed to run the system and in which they come to have the motivations, values, gratifications and even the broadly moral and aesthetic perceptions needed to serve and manage it more or less willingly, believing (whether rightly or wrongly) that they also are served by it. And neither holds that politics and the state can be separated from the capitalist economic system or that the state operates independently and autonomously. So even if Dewey might balk at Marx' contention that "[p]olitical power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another"[131], we quoted a text earlier in which he advanced a view in which he comes remarkably close to Marx' claim that "[t]he executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie".[132]

Further, Dewey and Marx approach the task of criticizing capitalism in very similar ways. Marx makes it very clear that he is not attacking individual capitalists for their moral failings and thus does not think that things will improve materially if only capitalists change their ways. He writes:

> I do not by any means depict the capitalist and the landlord in rosy colors. But individuals are dealt with here only in so far as they are

> the personifications of economic categories, the bearers of particular class-relations and interests. My standpoint, from which the development of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he remains, socially speaking, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them.[133]

While Dewey's standpoint is not quite that of the 'natural historian', he, like Marx, stresses the changeability of human nature and the various ways in which the social environment and its major institutions condition human behavior. Like Marx (and unlike moralists), he thinks that much of what has been ascribed to the moral failings of people is largely a function of the social and institutional environment in which they are found and, like Marx, he believes that if we are seriously interested in changing the world we should devote our efforts to changing that environment and not to morally praising, blaming and reforming particular individuals.

Further, while Dewey's stance is not that of the partisan and his rhetoric is, accordingly, not passionate, his criticisms of what becomes of human beings under capitalism are not much different from the charges Marx makes in the celebrated *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, namely they (or rather members of the proletariat) are estranged from nature, from themselves, from their fellow human beings, from their activities as productive human beings and from the products of their labor.[134] Dewey expressed similar ideas when he insisted upon the human and broadly cultural and educational significance of work and argued that at present instead of being an intrinsically social domain in which working people grow in imagination and responsibility, thus achieving individuality under the conditions of mass industrial society, it is, for most people, an affair which reduces them to mindless appendages of the machines they operate. Nor would Dewey have done anything but endorse Marx' claim that it is not enough that the wages of working people be raised, much less be raised by force. For this "would only mean a better payment of slaves and would not give this human meaning and worth either to the worker or to his labor".[135] For he and Marx agree that labor will only cease to be alienating when laborers function as autonomous rational agents who can and do make the decisions which determine much of their lives.

Finally, let us recall that Dewey envisaged an economy and a social system in which social values, final use, consumption and the gratifications found in the activity of working would occupy the place held by pecuniary private profits in the present capitalist society. We

also saw that Dewey was not particularly concerned with determining who, if anyone, would own capital property in the society he dimly envisaged. Now it may be argued that this suffices to make his sketch of a post-capitalist society substantially different from the equally dim sketch forthcoming from Marx. But even if this is the case, it should not cause us to overlook one very important point upon which Marx and Dewey agree. This point concerns the significance of the goal of economic egalitarianism in their respective sketches.

Of course, both thinkers object to the existence of great disparities in the distribution of wealth. But, as was seen, while Dewey makes this clear, he does not go on to claim that we should strive to achieve economic egalitarianism. To the contrary, he labels this view "arithmetically fractionalized individualism", thus indicating that the goal is, so to speak, still infected with the condition it seeks to cure. For instead of freeing us from a way of being in the socio-economic world in which the profit motive is profoundly important, it leaves the motive in place and may even accentuate it. Marx makes a point very much like this in the course of arguing that the first and most obvious way of understanding what Communism amounts to is very far from what would exist in a fully developed Communist society.[136] Marx describes the former position as the first crude stage of Communism. In it, private property would be abolished and the things which had formerly been privately owned would be commonly owned. Under these conditions things would be "levelled down" and what could not be commonly owned (Marx' example is special human talents) would be under attack.[137] Further, Marx compares the transition from a society in which property is private to one like this to the transition from marriage (*i.e.*, women are the exclusive private property of their husbands) to a situation in which women are "the common property of the community". This, he says, would be a transition from "exclusive marriage to the private property owner to the relationship of universal prostitution with the community". This should make it abundantly clear that Marx does not picture a fully developed Communist society in terms resembling a perverse form of egalitarianism. For the obvious burden of his analogy is that even if something is gained when items which would not be treated as property cease to be private property and become instead common property, what is gained still leaves a very great deal to be desired. Again: the goal which Marx hopes Communism will achieve is not to ensure that each person has the same share as everyone else of something which ultimately should not exist (private property). Rather it is to abolish private property and all it stands for. Now even if Dewey's hopes are not quite so utopian and grandiose as this, they are for something markedly similar to what would be found in a fully developed Communist society.

In view of these rather substantial points upon which Dewey and Marx agree we might expect that Dewey (and his followers) would underscore this and portray themselves as either Marxists or, at the least, as deeply sympathetic to important ideas in Marx' philosophy. But while Dewey refers to Marx frequently and does, at times, speak of his views with favor[138], in his longest sustained discussion of Marx and Marxism[139], Dewey draws no distinction between the views of Marx himself and the extant versions of his position (Chapter Four of *Freedom and Culture*, entitled, 'Totalitarian Economics and Democracy') Rather, he goes to some lengths to convince us that his position and Marx' are fundamentally opposed to one another. One major charge he makes is that even though Marxism as originally formulated did not hold that the only causes of social events are economic, this important point was subsequently relegated "to a footnote" and that instead of being "relativistic and pluralistic" the position affirmed "the all-comprehensive character of economic determination".[140] Marxism did this because it mistakenly identified scientific knowledge with necessary, all-comprehensive laws. Now, we know better and realize that "probability and pluralism are the characteristics of the present state of science".[141] We recognize the importance of the causal sequences science uncovers and we also realize that it is one thing to uncover such sequences and a much different thing to subscribe to "the idea that all sets of events are linked together into a single whole by one causal law".[142] The latter view is not scientific but "metaphysical and extra-scientific"[143], and what makes it extra-scientific and metaphysical does not depend upon the kinds of items it unifies, but upon the logical and epistemological character of the 'law' it allegedly uncovers. Hence, we should not be misled by the fact that under the guise of materialism and in the name of science Marx converted the Hegelian dialectic of ideas into a dialectic of economic classes. For the idea that there exists a self-determined goal of economic movement is as much a species of "romantic absolutism" as Hegel's picture of the movement of logical categories in the absolute system.

While Dewey does not here speak of 'foundations' and 'meta-narratives', the charge he is making could easily be expressed in these terms. For what it comes to is that Marxism, in part because of a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of scientific knowledge and in part because in it the economic factor "is isolated and treated as the cause of all social change"[144], presents itself as a meta-narrative, in which all important socio-historical phenomena are rendered intelligible on the basis of a single necessary law. The alternative which Dewey favors denies the existence of all such comprehensive laws and is, as we indicated, pluralistic and relativistic. According to it, socio-political

phenomena are products of interactions of factors whose respective weights cannot be determined once and for all. For this reason alone Dewey holds that meta-narratives of the allegedly Marxist variety can only be misleading. For they support the belief that there is some substitute for the patient observation of existing conditions as these situations arise.

Along with objecting to the claim that Marxism is a scientific theory of society, Dewey contends that some of its central empirical assertions are false. Marxism holds that under Communism the state will wither away and die and this, Dewey observes, has obviously not taken place.[145] In addition, Dewey claims that the distinguishing feature of Marxism is not its assertion of economic determinism but the contention that "class warfare is the channel through which economic forces operate to effect social change and progress".[146] Dewey objects to this because it makes classes the agents of history. But that involves "the erection of actual human beings into fixed entities called classes, having no overlapping interests ... ".[147] It converts "abstractions into entities (and) smells more of a dialectic of concepts than of a realistic examination of facts ... ".[148] Dewey also objects to the Marxist claim that social progress is a function of conflict, holding that this is an "exaggeration" and that the opposite exaggeration attributing progress to cooperation is a more reasonable one.[149] And finally, Dewey insists that in dealing with the problem of accounting for socio-economic changes Marxism fails to acknowledge the important role played by science and technology.[150]

The penultimate point obviously has practical and strategic implications. For if conflict is not the only means of affecting social change then Marxism obviously goes wrong in asserting that violence must 'inevitably' accompany changes.[151] Perhaps we should stress the fact that Dewey's complaint is not that Marxism is willing to employ violence to effect social changes. Rather it is that it views violence as inevitable; for, this involves knowing what cannot be known and, worse, it predisposes us to use violence where intelligence might better serve our purposes. Finally, Dewey claims that the absolutistic, monistic character of Marxism encourages and provides the ideological backing for the totalitarian suppression of freedom and dissent. It obscures the inestimable importance of formal democracy, genuine pluralism and - most importantly, perhaps - invites us to overlook the fact that democratic methods are "indispensable to effecting change in the interest of freedom".[152]

I do not think it can be denied that when Dewey formulated these objections they all were appropriate to the position labelled "Marxism". Nor can it be denied that a very great deal, if not most, of what has been labelled "Marxism" both by its proponents and opponents has the

features Dewey identifies and rightly attacks. Nor, thirdly and shifting our focus from Marxism to the positions Marx himself advocated, can it be denied that some of Dewey's criticisms of Marxism are sound as criticisms of what we find in Marx' texts. An example is Dewey's objection to the way the notion of class is employed in Marxism. This reveals a theoretical and practical weakness in the position of Marx. But is this true of all Dewey's criticisms of Marxism? Or can it be argued that much that goes and has gone by the name "Marxism" and that Dewey attacked as Marxism distorts the views Marx himself formulated? Of particular interest to us, can it be argued that while Marxism presents itself as a scientific meta-narrative allegedly providing comprehensive necessary knowledge of the socio-political world, the position Marx himself formulated is contextualist and post-modern and thus implies that no such knowledge is possible? Obviously, our reply cannot be based upon some well-known, detailed texts in which Marx spells out his epistemological and methodological views and reveals that his understanding of science is much like Dewey's. For no such texts exist. Further, it would require a paper as long as this to sample the textual evidence favoring this conclusion. In lieu of this, I will simply call attention to some well-known secondary texts which make fairly obvious points indicating that the criticisms Dewey makes of Marxism do not hold true of the views Marx himself held. If these points are well taken, I think it becomes plausible to hold that Marx, like Dewey, was a contextualist.

Let us begin with the slightly peripheral question which concerns Marx' political views and admit immediately that Marx does not stress the importance of formal democracy, civil rights, *etc.*, all of which provide an institutional framework which tolerates and encourages dissent and disagreement and thus, as Dewey argues, supports both science and democracy. Is this because he believes that since his theory presents the absolute truth, only fools and knaves disagree with it? An affirmative answer would, as Dewey claims, link a misunderstanding of the nature of science with political totalitarianism. But as Ralph Miliband argues, no such link exists in Marx' philosophy. For, while Marx does not stress the importance of political forms, *etc.*, this is not because he fails to appreciate the importance of civil rights, the suffrage, and so on. To the contrary, Marx appreciates what the latter makes possible for human beings. But he thinks that there are values and gratifications which go beyond them. The point, as Miliband argues, concerns

> ...a major Marxist theme, namely that human emancipation can never be achieved in the political realm alone but requires the revolutionary transformation of the economic and social order.[153]

Miliband claims that Marx was right about this and equally right in his belief that to understand political reality it is necessary to probe beneath it. But, he argues that acknowledging these points does not imply that political forms, *etc.*, are of less than great consequence. Nor does it imply that they will cease to be of great consequence even in post-revolutionary societies. According to Miliband, Marx failed to realize this. He erred in thinking that when 'human emancipation' was achieved such political problems as would arise would be solved easily. So he thought it would not be necessary to keep in operation the formal political institutions and procedures which made human emancipation possible and which preserve it in an on-going community. Of course, this is a serious error. But it is not of the same order as failing to appreciate the values of human individuality and freedom or sanctioning a totalitarian form of human life. Nor does it reflect a misunderstanding of the kind of knowledge science makes possible. Rather, it reflects an optimistic view of what can be achieved in the best of human societies.

Turning next to the character of the views Marx formulated, consider the rather startling claims found in Lukács' essay, 'What is Orthodox Marxism?' Lukács defines the meaning of his question by asking us to assume that "recent research had disproved once and for all every one of Marx' individual theses".[154] Now, the orthodox Marxist would have no difficulty accepting these findings and continuing to maintain his orthodoxy precisely because what makes one an orthodox Marxist is not acceptance of the results of Marx' investigations. Rather, it is acceptance of dialectical materialism as a method. While it is far from clear what exactly Lukács means by the method of dialectical materialism, the very way in which Lukács raises his question should make it clear that what he thinks is most valuable in Marx' works is not a necessary theory or vision of the socio-political order but a way of examining this order in full recognition of its specificity and historicity. So much is this the case that Lukács writes: "Concrete totality is, therefore, the category that governs reality."[155] But if this is so and if, in addition, the concrete totalities in question are social processes whose constituent objects undergo substantial changes as these processes develop, then it is singularly inappropriate to seek for ahistorical, foundational knowledge of these processes or to employ the 'method' of the natural sciences in studying them.[156] Classical economics made the latter mistake in concluding that it had discovered eternal laws of economic life and Lukács refers to "vulgar Marxists" who make a similar mistake, thinking "that there are eternal categories valid for all social formations".[157]

Avineri also underscores the importance of what is ineluctably specific and historical for Marx. Commenting upon Marx' list of the

measures which the proletariat can be expected to institute after having gained power in advanced countries, he observes

> Not only is it (Marx' list of measures) undoctrinaire and flexible, its approach is pluralistic in its clear assertion that the arrangements will have to vary considerably from country to country.[158]

Avineri develops these points, arguing that Marx' pluralism manifests itself in his explicit recognition of the different elements making up the political order (such as institutions, mores and traditions) and in the ways in which he does not limit himself to advancing mechanistic analyses of economic aspects of society.[159]

The final point I wish to make concerns Dewey's claim that in Marxism the economic factor is treated as the sole cause of socio-economic change. Is this also true of Marx? If it is, then Marx was an economic determinist who held that economic forces alone have causal power and that everything else in the socio-economic world is epiphenomenal. And so, for Marx as well as for Marxism, a grand socio-economic narrative can be (or, rather, has been) constructed which reveals once and for all the workings of history, thus confirming Althusser's claim that Marx did for history what Galileo did for physical nature. The view that this is in fact Marx' position is often defended on the basis of Marx' summary of his position and his use of the metaphor of base and superstructure in 'The Preface to a Critique of Political Economy'.[160] Thus it is no accident that sympathetic commentators such as Miliband[161] and Rader[162] focus attention upon this text in their attempt to show that the interpretation is mistaken and does Marx a serious injustice. Miliband reminds us that Marx' "cast of mind was strongly anti-determinist" and points out that Marx explicitly rejected the effort "...to use as one's master key a general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being super-historical".[163]

He also contends that Marx and Engels rejected mechanistic ideas of determination and he quotes Engels' contention that he and Marx had never "intended to suggest that 'the economic element is the only determining one', - a position which he (Engels) described as a 'meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase'".[164] Hence Miliband argues that base and superstructure must be taken as elements of an "historic bloc" which "will vary in their relative weight and importance according to time, place, circumstance, and human intervention".[165] This is not to deny that according to Marx the 'economic base' has a certain primacy among the elements of a bloc. But even here Miliband insists that we come much closer to Marx' position by treating the primacy of the economic as the primacy of an element for purposes of an inquiry.

So, the economic base has primacy only as the factor which is the "starting-point" of an analysis and not by virtue of being the decisive or determining factor of a bloc which outweighs all other factors in the last instance.[166] Rader reaches roughly the same conclusion on the basis of a painstaking analysis of the text of 'Preface', in which it is made clear that, among other things, many of the claims Marx makes about elements in the superstructure would make no sense if they were purely epiphenomenal. Needless to say, this position is not one to which Dewey does or would object. Indeed, it is virtually indistinguishable from the ones which, as we saw, Dewey himself holds.

I believe that taken together these points provide *prima facie* evidence for holding that Marx' position is basically as contextualist as Dewey's. Of course, much more needs to be done to make this conclusion secure, and, even if it is granted, it does not prove that Dewey's and Marx' socio-political philosophies are not basically opposed to one another. But we saw enough earlier to hold with some confidence that although each thinker has his characteristic strengths and weaknesses and although they disagree with one another on some points, this is not the case. I also believe that those sympathetic to the position which Marx and Dewey work out (each in his own way) have no reason to be troubled by the fact that Marx did not work out an epistemology and a theory of inquiry and that Dewey's analysis of capitalism cannot be compared to the theory Marx developed, or to avoid exploring the points upon which Marx and Dewey appear to disagree. But, I think, they do well to recognize how much these thinkers have in common and thus to abandon their unflattering views of Marx and Dewey respectively. For doing this helps them acknowledge problems in their own favored positions which they may be tempted to overlook. For it is easy for Deweyans to dwell upon Dewey's caution, his almost visceral empiricism and fallibilism, his passionate hope that scientific reason can uncover solutions to social problems acceptable to all or virtually all, and thus to overlook the fact that Dewey did advance an analysis of capitalism which claims that it suffers from basic shortcomings which can only be overcome by making radical changes in the basic institutions of our society. When these thinkers remind themselves of the fact that Dewey's position is like Marx' in a number of important respects we may expect that this point and its practical implications will become somewhat clearer to them. Followers of Marx, on the other hand, need to be reminded both of Miliband's point that Marx pays far too little attention to the theoretical and practical questions of politics and of the generally concrete and contextualist character of the theory they themselves advocate and seek to advance. They need to bear in mind the fact that Marx hoped to change the world on the basis of a theory which he took

to be empirical rather than a priori, especially since this will underscore for them the fact that Marx' radical vision is not a substitute for and does not itself determine the political actions and policies involved in changing the world. For I would think it should be clear to partisans of Marx and Dewey that if the point really is to change the world in some basic respects then their common problem is to discover how to do so in ways which are not likely to make things worse than they now are.

NOTES

1. It should not be thought that Marx' epistemological empiricism and his belief that some truths can only be apprehended under certain historical conditions are inconsistent with foundationalism and thus that he can only subscribe to foundationalism if he abandons views which are obviously more plausible than it. For the Aristotelian tradition holds that experience provides materials for certain knowledge and one can follow Hegel and hold that history brings forth both the objects of and conditions for foundational knowledge.

2. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge,* translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Minneapolis, Minn., University of Minnesota Press, 1984, p. xxiii.

3. *Loc. cit.*

4. *Ibid.* p. xxiv.

5. *Loc. cit.*

6. *Ibid.* p. 60.

7. Michael Foucault, *The Order of Things*, a translation of *Les Mots et Les Choses*, New York, N.Y., Random House, 1970, p. 263.

8. Richard Rorty, 'From Logic to Language to Play', *Proceedings and Addresses of The American Philosophical Association*, Vol. 59, 6 (1986), p. 752.

9. Louis Althusser, *For Marx,* translated by Ben Brewster, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, Penguin Books, ltd., 1969, p. 13-14.

10. *Ibid.* p. 14f.

11. *Ibid.* p. 12

12. *Loc. cit.*

13. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Enlarged Edition with a New Introduction by the Author, Boston, Mass.; Beacon Press, 1957, p. 21. Dewey makes this claim repeatedly in his mature works. Its presentation in *Reconstruction* is especially valuable because of being brief and, as Dewey observes, of having been "given with malice prepense". (p. 24)

14. *Ibid.* p. 12-13.

15. *Ibid.* p. 14.

16. *Ibid.* p. 12.

17. *Ibid.* p. 17.

18. *Ibid.* p. 19.

19. *Ibid.* p. 21.

20. *Ibid.* p. 20.
21. *Loc. cit.*
22. *Ibid.* p. 25.
23. *Ibid.* p. 26.
24. Richard Rorty has presented the most impressive case for the view that Dewey's thought is basically contextualistic. See essays 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, and 12 in Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism,* Minneapolis, Minn., University of Minnesota Press, 1982. I have discussed Rorty's views in my 'Rorty's Interpretation of Pragmatism'. (*Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society,* Vol. XVIII, #4, pp. 311-337). Rorty's views are also discussed in a symposium by John J. McDermott, R.W. Sleeper, and Abraham Edel, to which Rorty responds in 'Symposium on Rorty's Consequences of Pragmatism', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society,* Vol. XXI, #1, pp. 1-48.
25. Dewey presented the theory in a number of places. I believe his best and most mature formulation of it is in John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry,* New York, N.Y., Henry Holt and Company, 1938, Chapter VI, 'The Pattern of Inquiry', pp. 101-120.
26. As is well-known, Karl Popper stresses the importance of these features of science. Interestingly enough, he makes very little of the fact that in doing so he follows Dewey and the pragmatists and is, in fact, quite hostile to pragmatism.
27. See John Dewey, 'Propositions, Warranted Assertibility and Truth', in *Problems of Men,* New York, N.Y., Philosophical Library, 1946, pp. 331-357, esp. p. 337. I discuss this in Rorty's 'Interpretation of Pragmatism', p. 328 ff.
28. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature,* 2nd ed., La Salle, Ill., 1929, p. xiii.
29. *Experience and Nature* is, of course, the *locus classicus* for this. Briefer statements of Dewey's position can be found in the essays, 'The Inclusive Philosophical Idea' and 'Qualitative Thought' which are found in John Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization,* New York, N.Y., Minton, Balch and Company, 1931.
30. Dewey's best brief statement of this position and the grounds for it is to be found in his highly polemical essay, 'The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy', in *John Dewey On Experience, Nature, and Freedom,* ed. by Richard J. Bernstein, New York, N.Y., The Liberal Arts Press, 1960, pp. 19-70.
31. *Reconstruction in Philosophy,* p. 35.
32. John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture,* New York, Capricorn Books, 1962, p. 131 ff.
33. See *Reconstruction in Philosophy,* p. 38-43. Dewey also has no sympathy for romantic, reactionary attacks on the more obvious

by-products of an industrial society, quantification, mechanization and standardization. See *Individualism Old and New*, pp. 24-34 for Dewey's analysis of these attacks.

34. See also *Freedom and Culture*, pp. 137-138 and John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, Chicago, Ill., The Swallow Press, 1954, pp. 174-175.

35. John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New,* New York, N.Y., Capricorn Books, 1962, pp. 152-158.

36. *Reconstruction in Philosophy,* p. ix, and see also p. xxv and p. xxvii.

37. *Loc. cit.*

38. *The Public and its Problems*, p. 7

39. *Ibid.* p. 6-7.

40. *Ibid.* p. 7.

41. See John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, New York, N.Y., Minton, Balch and Company, 1929, Ch. X, pp. 254-287, for a brief and comprehensive statement of the position sketched here.

42. This should not be taken to mean that Dewey thinks that general social theories and programs are unnecessary. For he claims to the contrary that the problems we face cannot be adequately dealt with by "piecemeal policies undertaken *ad hoc*". John Dewey, *Liberalism And Social Action*, New York, N.Y., Capricorn Books, 1963, p. 62.

43. It may even be argued that these works are addressed to a rather particular audience, namely, secular, liberal intellectuals whose leanings are in the direction of socialism and who find themselves under attack both by Communists and classical liberals.

44. While Dewey was interested in the problem of social and political philosophy from the beginning of his career, he published no works dealing *primarily* with it until this period. During this period he published *The Public and Its Problems* (1927); *Individualism Old and New* (1929); *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935); and *Freedom And Culture* (1939). I point out here that Dewey frequently refers to problems facing his society as present difficulties and I follow him in contexts in which it is clear that the difficulties I refer to are the ones which were current at the time Dewey wrote. I should add that in many cases the difficulties still obtain. But that is another matter and I trust that in context my temporal references are clear.

45. He accuses Marxists of making this mistake. See *Freedom and Culture*, pp. 76-77. Dewey repeats this charge in the 'Afterword' to *The Public and its Problems* (p. 227) which was written in 1946. We shall deal with some aspects of this charge later.

46. *Freedom and Culture*, p. 76.

47. *Loc. cit.*

48. *Individualism Old and New*, p. 119.

49. *Individualism Old and New*, p. 32-33.
50. *Ibid.* p. 106-107.
51. *Ibid.* p. 54.
52. *Ibid.* p. 55.
53. *Ibid.* p. 36.
54. *Ibid.* p. 71.
55. *Ibid.* p. 74.
56. *Ibid.* p. 74.
57. *Ibid.* p. 76.
58. *Ibid.* p. 92.
59. *Ibid.* p. 81. For a slightly different treatment of these issues which again stresses the importance of historical change and the need to be wary of employing moral ideals which were appropriate at one stage of socio-economic development in later more complicated circumstances, see *Freedom and Culture*, Ch. III.
60. *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 15.
61. *Ibid.* p. 32.
62. *Loc. cit.*
63. *Ibid.* p. 32-37. According to Dewey, Bentham believed in the desirability of increasing the equalization of wealth and thought this would take place under conditions of economic liberalism.
64. *Ibid.* p. 34.
65. *Ibid.* p.39.
66. *Loc. cit.*
67. *Loc. cit.*
68. *Ibid.* p. 32.
69. We refer to this as the libertarian view. Dewey often labels it "individualism".
70. Dewey works out this part of his position in *The Public and its Problems*, a rich, complex work that deserves far more critical attention than it has received. In my discussion, I consider only material which is essential to the argument I am developing.
71. *The Public and Its Problems*, p. 28
72. *Ibid.* p. 72.
73. *Ibid.* p. 29.
74. *The Public and Its Problems*, p. 20-21. These theories are mentioned and dismissed en bloc in *The Public and Its Problems* (pp. 20-21).
75. *Ibid.* p. 22.
76. *Ibid.* p. 21.
77. *Ibid.* p. 20.
78. *Ibid.* p. 12-13.
79. *Ibid.* p. 48-49.
80. *Ibid.* p. 33. Dewey insists that it is not possible to present

a general description of the state in other than these extremely formal terms. For we cannot determine on apriori grounds what publics do and will exist and what degrees and kinds of organization are needed to secure the interests of publics. Hence Dewey claims that "In concrete fact, ... there is no form of state which can be said to be the best; not at least till history is ended, and one can survey all of its forms."

81. *Ibid.* p. 73.

82. *Ibid.* p. 87. Dewey ascribes this position to Locke.

83. *Liberalism and Social Action*, p.17. Dewey tells us that Bentham, following Hume, held that "Natural rights and natural liberties exist only in the kingdom of mythological social zoology." The context makes it clear that Dewey is completely sympathetic to this position.

84. *The Public and Its Problems*, p. 86.

85. *Ibid.* p. 86-87.

86. *Ibid.* p. 87.

87. *Loc. cit.* It should be clear that Dewey's attack on individualism and the theory of natural rights is not aimed at the thesis that the legitimate authority of the state derives from the public and ultimately the individuals making up the public. Rather, his target is the view that all such authority must be ultimately grounded in singular, unchanging, isolated individuals (or individuals considered in this guise). His claim is that no such grounding is necessary to establish the former thesis.

88. *Ibid.* p. 91.

89. *Ibid.* p. 92.

90. *Loc. cit.*

91. *Ibid.* p. 99.

92. *Ibid.* p. 96.

93. *Ibid.* p. 104.

94. *Ibid.* pp. 103-105.

95. *Individualism Old and New*, pp. 119-120.

96. *Ibid.* pp. 108-111, pp. 117-119, pp. 102-103. Dewey thinks Marx overlooked this and thus failed to see that intelligent capitalists could prevent capitalism from destroying itself.

97. *Ibid.* p. 102.

98. *Ibid.* p. 118.

99. *Ibid.* p. 119.

100. *Ibid.* p. 135.

101. *Ibid.* p. 134.

102. *Loc. cit.*

103. *Ibid.* p. 135. Attractive as this idea is, it is far from clear how an economy in which human values take precedence over pecuniary values will actually work and how, in particular, it could be

made to operate in non-authoritarian and non-paternalistic ways. Obviously a discussion of these problems is beyond the scope of this paper.

104. *Ibid.* p. 131.
105. *Ibid.* p. 132.
106. *Ibid.* p. 133.
107. *The Public and Its Problems*, p. 108. Dewey goes on to observe in this context that "the main business of government" has been "to make property interests secure". (p. 108-109).
108. *Individualism Old and New*, pp. 67-68 and cf. pp. 88 ff.
109. *Ibid.* p. 69.
110. *Ibid.* p. 127.
111. *Ibid.* p. 128.
112. *Ibid.* p. 127.
113. *Ibid.* p. 128.
114. *Ibid.* p. 127.
115. *Ibid.* p. 128.
116. *Ibid.* p. 129-130.
117. *Nichomachean Ethics*, 1094b30- 1095a10. Dewey's estimate of what we may reasonably expect from our educational institutions is reminiscent of Aristotle's remarks about the benefits forthcoming from the study of ethics in *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094b30-1095a10. We also point out that the evidence for Dewey's position can be found in the fact that the wide study of the social sciences in colleges and universities seems to have had little effect on the values and behavior of college students before or after they leave school.
118. *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 31. Dewey provides no textual reference for Ellis' remark and I am unable to supply one. The fact that he quotes this text with approval should give pause both to those who think that he is a naive democrat and to those who believe he has an exceedingly high estimate of human nature.
119. *The Public and Its Problems*, p. 83.
120. *Ibid.* pp. 79-80.
121. *Ibid.* p. 83.
122. *Ibid.* p. 121.
123. *Ibid.* pp. 116-120.
124. Georg Lukács, 'What is Orthodox Marxism?' in *History and Class Consciousness,* translated by Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1971, pp. 2-5.
125. Karl Marx, 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Introduction', in *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right',* translated by Annette Jolin and Joseph O'Malley, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 138.
126. Dewey speaks in more sober terms about the problems and

potentialities of situations. But as we saw, he is thoroughly unsympathetic to moralistic and voluntaristic appeals for social change.

127. Karl Marx, *Theses On Feuerbach*, in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 157.

128. *Loc. cit.*

129. Perhaps it will be argued that in *Freedom and Culture* Dewey seems intent on situating his position between the Marxist view which, he alleges, "reduces the human factor as nearly as possible to zero" when explaining social events (p. 75) and the kind of theory which explains social phenomena on the grounds of psychological phenomena. But even granting this, it is noteworthy that Dewey not only insists that the significance of a human motive is a function of its social setting (p. 110-111), but explicitly refuses to grant the unchangeableness of human nature. (p. 112) In view of this, it is hard to see what grounds he can have for claiming that his position is substantially different from Marx' on this question.

130. Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, p. 225.

131. *Ibid.* p. 238.

132. *Ibid.* p. 223 and for Dewey's text see note 107.

133. Karl Marx, *Capital*, translated by Ben Fowkes, New York, N.Y., Vintage Books, 1977, p. 92. This passage is found in the Preface to the first edition.

134. *Capital*, pp. 764-772 and pp. 798-799.

135. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, p. 85. In 'Wage-Labour and Capital'. Marx argues that it is not enough for the proletariat to labor at increasing the overall wealth of capitalist society and benefit materially from doing so. For to do this is still to produce wealth "that does not belong to it and that rules over it ... the golden chains by which the bourgeoisie drags it in its train". (p. 262) Again, the voice is not Dewey's but his position is in sympathy with these claims.

136. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, pp. 87-96, especially pp. 87-89.

137. *Ibid.* p. 87. Marx expresses this in the assertion that crude communism "wishes to abstract forcibly from talent, *etc.*"

138. See, for example, *Freedom and Culture*, p. 78, p. 82 and *Individualism Old and New*, p. 103.

139. Dewey draws no distinction between the views of Marx himself and the extant versions of his position.

140. *Freedom and Culture*, p. 77.

141. *Ibid.* p. 84.

142. *Loc. cit.*

143. *Ibid.* p. 80.

144. *Ibid.* p. 76.
145. *Ibid.* p. 91.
146. *Ibid.* p. 79.
147. *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 80.
148. *Loc. cit.*
149. *Ibid.* pp. 80-81.
150. *Ibid.* pp. 81-82.
151. *Ibid.* p. 78.
152. *Freedom and Culture*, p. 93 and see pp. 89-93.
153. Ralph Miliband, *Marxism and Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977. References in this paragraph are to p. 10 and pp. 10-12. Miliband cites Marx' essay, 'On the Jewish Question' as evidence for his position.
154. *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 1. The fact that it makes sense for us to do as Lukács asks clearly indicates that Marx' views are empirical rather than *apriori* or necessary.
155. *Ibid.* p. 10.
156. *Ibid.* pp. 10-13.
157. *Ibid.* p. 9.
158. Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 206.
159. *Ibid.* p. 216.
160. This is found in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, pp. 388-391.
161. *Loc. cit.*
162. Melvin Rader, *Marx's Interpretation of History*, New York, N.Y., Oxford University Press, 1979.
163. *Ibid.* p. 9.
164. *Ibid.* p. 8.
165. *Loc. cit.*
166. *Loc. cit.*

JAMES CAMPBELL

Dewey's Understanding of Marx and Marxism

Attacks on John Dewey by proponents of capitalism and Communism have not been few. Nor have they been consistent. If we focus on the years around Dewey's death in 1952, we find Friedrich A. Hayek denouncing Dewey as "the leading philosopher of American left-wingism" and Harry K. Wells berating him as "the leading philosopher of U.S. imperialism".[1] Obviously, both of these charges cannot be true. Some of the confusion here is due to a lack of understanding (and perhaps not a little malice) on the part of the critics; some of it is a result of Dewey's attempt to develop an independent social and economic stance that opposed both the capitalism and the organized Marxism of his day. But, whatever its causes, this confusion continues to our present day.

In this paper I will be attempting to provide a preliminary sketch of Dewey's understanding of Marx and Marxism, an effort that I view as part of a developing, larger inquiry of recovering a usable social past. I do not intend to try to acquit (or convict) Dewey here of being either a dupe of Wall Street or of the Kremlin. Although at some point in the larger inquiry it should be possible to determine which aspects of Dewey's contribution to American social thought were beneficial and which were not, my goal here will be much more modest: to attempt to lay out Dewey's beliefs - about the American economic situation, about American capitalism and its main alternative, about the values that are important to a good society - in the context of his lived situation. In this way, I hope it will be possible to understand Dewey's writings and actions better on their own terms, not backwards from our situation. Only then will it be possible to assess Dewey's contribution and to appropriate for our own use what is of value there.

Section One will sketch out from Dewey's perspective some preliminary themes: his familiarity with and understanding of Marx, Marxism and its relationship to developments in the Soviet Union, and the Communist Party of the USA. Section Two will consider Dewey's critique of American capitalism; Section Three, his criticism of the application of what he saw as Marx' message in the American situation. In Section Four, I will consider Dewey's own version of socialism. Section Five will develop briefly the meaning of the differences between Dewey and the Marxists of his day for our contemporary situation.

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I

When Marx died in 1883, John Dewey was a graduate student at Johns Hopkins preparing for an academic career in philosophy. The received wisdom is that Dewey had at best a sketchy understanding of Marx' work and consequently avoided discussing it. As Max Eastman reported in 1941, Dewey once told him "'I have never read Marx ... I cannot speak with authority on the subject'".[2] As Dewey himself wrote a decade earlier: "I do not know enough about Marx to enter into the discussion concerning his philosophy" (*LW* 5:367).[3] But, if we look at Dewey's work, we find that the received wisdom is at best misleading. For example, Dewey mentioned Marx in the context of a discussion of the labor theory of value as early as 1898. He discussed Marxism and its place within socialism in much greater detail in his lectures in China immediately after WWI. He considered there, for example, the anomaly of the recent revolution in 'backward' Russia from the viewpoint of the current European Marxist tradition.[4] From that point on, as we shall see, his writings were peppered with references to and discussions of Marxism and American Marxists.

Although the position that Dewey avoided comment on Marxism will be seen to be false, those who examine Dewey's comments carefully have no trouble agreeing with his own admission that he was no authority on Marx, much less what we today would call a scholar of Marx' work. Although Dewey presumably read a substantial amount of Marx' works after the mid-1930s, he never really understood the complexity of Marx' thought. His approach to the various differences of interpretation and extrapolation within the broad Marxist movement was either agnostic - that there was no definite answer to be found within the Marxian corpus - or apathetic - that it was not important enough to find out if there was a definite answer. Dewey was willing to accept the claims of the various Marxists, especially the Bolsheviks and their American cousins, at face value. If they claimed to be acting in the name of Marx, Dewey was willing to accept their authenticity; and if he found fault with their actions, he was also willing to accept their claims that their policies were mandated by Marx himself.

As individuals interested in the advance of knowledge and the improvement of society, we might regret the fact that a full encounter between Dewey and the writings of Marx did not occur. But as individuals with private lives and professional commitments, rooted in complex social situations, we can understand how this might have happened. (How many of us are drawn by, yet keep putting off, serious consideration of, for example, liberation theology or Islamic thought?) In Dewey's case, some personal factors might have deterred the encounter. For some interpreters, the fact that Dewey led a life of relative economic security is offered as a significant fact. For others,

the fact that when Dewey visited the Soviet Union he was reaching the end of his seventh decade is important. Perhaps other personal matters are relevant. I would like to consider briefly three interrelated social factors that I believe would go far to help explain Dewey's failure to address Marx directly.

The first of these factors was the generally low regard with which Marx was held as a thinker during Dewey's lifetime, a stature that has greatly increased in almost all academic circles since Dewey's death in 1952. Much of this low regard resulted from simple-minded reactionary biases. A good deal of it, however, resulted from the belief widely held in America that Marx had offered the socialist movement a mechanical and absolute system - in the words of George Herbert Mead, "a vision on the Mount which showed them what the order of society should be".[5]

The major aspect in the overcoming of this understanding of Marx was the translation, publication and widespread availability of Marxian texts, especially his early writings. Although this material began to make its way into print as early as 1902, it did not begin to appear in the standard German edition until 1927 (with translation of some of it into English beginning in the mid-1930s). One particularly significant fact for our consideration of Marx' stature in America's intellectual circles was the fact that the publication of a complete English translation of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* occurred only in 1959. The Marx who came to prominence after Dewey's death was not the same Marx with whom Dewey was familiar.[6]

This fact goes a long way - although not all the way - towards explaining Dewey's selection of individuals whose thought he believed important to champion in the quest for social change in America. Not Marx, not even such figures as Eugene Victor Debs, or Bill Haywood or Daniel DeLeon, were selected. Rather, Dewey looked to such now all-but-forgotten figures as Edward Bellamy and Henry George as guides for the American situation. Bellamy, for example, was a "Great American Prophet", a proponent of "an American communism" that was deliberately "ethical" as distinct from the self-styled "scientific" Communism of Marx.[7] Dewey called George "one of the great names among the world's social philosophers. It would require less than the fingers of the two hands to enumerate those who from Plato down rank with him" (*LW* 3:359). That Dewey could have rated these figures higher than Marx may suggest to some only a conclusion about how wrong Dewey could be. A better conclusion to draw, I think, would be one about how far Marx has come.

A second factor that needs to be mentioned in a consideration of Dewey's failure to examine Marx' works directly was the birth of the Soviet Union, and its image in the United States, from the October Revolution through the end of WWII. Whether Bolshevism repre-

sented the carrying-out of Marx' plan - as Joseph Stalin said, "Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution"[8] - or whether it was Marxism at all, is a question about which I would not presume to lecture the present audience. I would only suggest that, to contemporary American eyes, Stalin's claim was certainly plausible. The defection of the (other) revisionists, the discrediting of the various branches of socialism and Orthodox Marxism in the Great War, the endless claims from Lenin and the other Bolsheviks that they were the 'true' Marxists, all fit together. Americans, whether favorably disposed toward Bolshevism or not, in general accepted the hyphenation of Marxism and Leninism as contained in claims like the following: "there is only one Marxism - Marxism-Leninism - the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. Only one".[9]

Dewey visited "Soviet Russia" in the Summer of 1928 and later published a series of six "impressions" - he stressed the term 'impression' - of his visit there. One of the elements of these impressions is his obvious ambivalence about the claims of the Soviets to be the 'true' Marxists. He believed, on the one hand, that Marxism was essentially a matter of class struggle and violent revolution followed by the dictatorship of the proletariat, all of which the Soviets surely had. On the other hand, Dewey believed that the situation in the Soviet Union also contained purely Russian elements as well. In the first of these impressions, he wrote that

> with no desire to minimize the import of the fate of Bolshevist Marxianism for Russia and for the whole world, my conviction is unshaken that this phase of affairs is secondary in importance to something else that can only be termed a revolution ... . [a] liberation of a people to consciousness of themselves as a determining power in the shaping of their ultimate fate (*LW* 3:205, 204; cf. 222-3, 244-7; *LW* 6:291-4).

However, for Dewey the recognition that the Soviet system was not reducible to Marxism did not preclude its being in some sense 'true' Marxism because he saw Leninism, and later Stalinism, as additions to Marxism, not omissions or perversions.

The final theme I wish to discuss briefly here is the role of the 'official' Communist Party in America in shaping perceptions of Marxism here. Despite the riot of American socialisms during Dewey's lifetime, the Communist Party of the USA deserves special merit in this context because of its self-fostered reputation for being the 'true' Marxist party, a reputation it fostered even at the cost of being seen as a foreign party. If we take as our focus the period between the gradual emergence of the Party after the establishment of the Third International in 1919 until its downgrading to the American Communist Political

Association in 1944, the Party was always under scrutiny as to its Americanness. This problem was seen to be so serious that at times extreme claims were made in an attempt to compensate for the Party's special relationship with Moscow. Consider, for example, the period of the Popular Front, when Earl Browder announced that "the doctrines of Leninism" harmonize completely with "the true doctrines of Americanism" or that "Communism is the Americanism of the twentieth century..."[10].

The Party seems to have attracted some of its following because of its internationalism. Its Moscow connection could offer prospective members both Karl Marx and an actual on-going model of what society would be like after the Revolution, based upon the Soviet model. But the Party also seems to have attracted some of its following in spite of its perceived foreignness. The Party offered a place to individuals with both idealism and a sense of urgency. It was well-organized and took what were considered to be clear and strong stances with regard to the capitalist 'enemy'. The Party was also in the forefront of support for the Spanish Republic and various other anti-Fascist endeavors. In these ways, the Party was able to stake out a place for itself in the American social debate and shape perception in America of the nature of Marxism.

These three social factors do not offer a full explanation, much less a justification, of why Dewey was never drawn into a full encounter with Marx; but they do suggest lines of inquiry that need to be followed out before we will be able to explain why Dewey did not examine Marx more carefully. It is interesting to speculate about what might have resulted from a full encounter. In what follows, however, I will concentrate on what did happen, on what Dewey had to say about Marx (as he understood him) and the Marxists (as he understood them). But first, I will begin with a brief examination of Dewey's criticism of American capitalism.

II

Dewey was part of the long stream of thought that recognized the importance of the economic aspect of social life. In his view, a central place must be made for economics in any attempt to understand society. What this place is to be, however, and how it has been modified by developments in the modern world are not necessarily predetermined. Dewey rejected the view that human happiness is by and large independent of economics; but he rejected as well the opposite view that economics is, as he put it, "*the* cause of *all* social change" (*F&C* 76). Both now and in the past, "[t]he rise and wane of economic forces in influence is a topic for specific historic study and analysis, the same as that of any other factor" (*LW* 3:20; cf. *F&C* 9). Moreover, when

Dewey rejected this view, he had the Marxists in mind: the view that "economics is the *sole* condition affecting the entire range of political organization" he attributed, rightly or wrongly, to "the writings of Marx" (*LW* 2:378).

Dewey himself advocated what he saw as the more pluralistic view that "economics, morals, art, science, and so on" are all aspects that have contributed significantly through the centuries to social change (*F&C* 16). This larger point having been made, Dewey was quick to point out that, in *his* society at *his* time, economics played the primary role in social life: "The life which men, women and children actually lead, the opportunities open to them, the values they are capable of enjoying, their education, their share in all the things of art and science, are mainly determined by economic conditions." (*LW* 4:225; cf. *LW* 5:98; 6:152). But, rather than seeing this fact as a result of the economic determination of all of life, Dewey believed that it was our modern culture - our overall interactive framework of many factors,

> the chief of which are law and politics, industry and commerce, science and technology, the arts of expression and communication, and of morals, or the values men prize and the ways in which they evaluate them; and finally, though indirectly, the system of general ideas used by men to justify and to criticize the fundamental conditions under which they live, their social philosophy (F & C 23)

that *makes* economics the primary factor in our social life.

Dewey was discussing the culture of a particular advanced society, one that was deeply flawed because the material and other advantages of social living were not being made available to all in a reasonably fair manner. The society was economically integrated, the division of labor widespread, the indirect consequences of actions "extensive, enduring, and serious" (*LW* 2:314); but the benefits of such co-operative interaction were being appropriated by the few. The lack of a true common good was, Dewey believed, the result of capitalism, an inherited system of economic organizing that took as its final criterion of success not the well-being of all but "the maximum of personal profit" (*MW* 11:104).

We need not see the continued existence of capitalism, Dewey wrote, as primarily "the fruit of criminal conspiracy or of sinister intent" (*LSA* 76). While not denying that there were those "who have ability to manipulate social relations for their own advantage" (*LW* 2:341), the source of the difficulty, Dewey thought, was more fundamental: "traditions, customs, and institutions which persist without being subjected to a systematic empirical investigation ... ".[11] In other words, the reason why a democratic society would tolerate such social costs when it could eliminate them was that the intellectual and moral

aspects of society were lagging behind the economic. "Human life", he wrote, "gets set in patterns, institutional and moral" (*LSA* 49). The discovery and dissemination of the social facts and beginning to think more intelligently in moral matters were the keys to overcoming this lag. We could create a lasting common good only if we adopted constructive social and economic changes, changes that were alien to the workings of capitalism.

Dewey made this general criticism of the workings of capitalism in his society specific with a series of attacks on what he took to be its two major props: that capitalism was 'natural' and that capitalism 'worked'. Let us begin with a brief consideration of the former. Dewey rejected the claim that the capitalist organization of the economic system somehow reflects "the order of nature ... to which we must accommodate ourselves as to sunshine and storms ... " (*LW* 7:341- 2). Here he was especially interested in undermining the claim that capitalism is grounded "in immutable human nature" (*MW* 14:78), since he believed that "economic institutions and relations are among the manifestations of human nature that are most susceptible of change" (*PM* 189). Dewey was interested as well in denying the claims of capitalism that "man exists naturally in a state of rest so that he requires some external force to set him into action" and therefore "nobody would do anything, or at least anything of use to others, without a prospect of some tangible reward" (*MW* 14:83-4). For Dewey, this view does not accurately reflect human nature; and, more generally, capitalism is not rooted in immutable human nature but simply in choices that have been made about how to organize property and labor.

The second mistaken defense of capitalism, Dewey thought, was a defense based in its 'working'. Here, Dewey's list of charges was long and detailed. One aspect of Dewey's criticism was that capitalism was functioning wastefully. This meant, on the one hand, that the system of competition and profit-seeking itself prevented any possibility of "coordinated planning of social development" (*LW* 5:69) and, on the other hand, that the capitalist system controlled the application of science and technology and used them more to increase profits than to advance the common good. Capitalism frequently takes credit for advances in science and technology, Dewey wrote, "as if machines were made by the desire for money profit, not by impersonal science ..." (*LW* 5:78). The reality is far different. Moreover, he wrote, because we have harnessed the power of machines and technology "to the dollar rather than to the liberation and enrichment of human life ... " (*LW* 5:87), we have retarded possible progress, not advanced it. "The engineer has worked in subordination to the business manager whose primary concern is ... with the interests of property as worked out in the feudal and semi-feudal period" (*LW* 2:302).

A second point in Dewey's reply to the claim that capitalism

'works' was that it was itself largely responsible for the insecurity of modern life. "The conditions that generate insecurity for the many no longer spring from nature. They are found in institutions and arrangements that are within deliberate human control" (*LSA* 60). Instead of a planning economy that took as one of its primary goals guaranteeing secure and useful employment for workers, capitalism offered the claim that "society in general is served by the unplanned coincidence of the consequences of a vast multitude of efforts put forth by isolated individuals without reference to any social end ... " (*LSA* 60). Dewey saw happening as a result a system of busts and booms that allowed widespread "cyclical depressions" and "a standing army at all times who have no regular work" (*LW* 5:67-8). "It would be difficult to bring any more severe indictment against anything that calls itself a civilization", he wrote, "than the fact that it is not able to utilize the energy, physical, intellectual and moral, of the members who are desirous and anxious of rendering some kind of service ... " (*MW* 11:75). Dewey was also clear in his condemnation of voluntary private charity as a response to the ills of capitalist insecurity, seeing it as an inadequate tool that aims at the "relief" of a problem when "prevention" was both necessary and possible (*LW* 5:84).

Dewey's third major criticism of the claim that capitalism was 'working' was that, in its quest for greater profits through higher levels of productivity, capitalism was willing to accept the "enslavement of men, women and children in factories in which they are animated machines to tend inanimate machines" (*LW* 2:344). Such working had no internal meaning, only external reward. Dewey wrote that "most workers find no replenishment, no renewal and growth of mind, no fulfilment in work. They labor to get mere means of later satisfaction" (*MW* 14:186). Under capitalism, of course, this is not a problem, at least until it results in lowered productivity: "labor means in economic theory something painful, something so onerously disagreeable or 'costly' that every individual avoids it if he can, and engages in it only because of the promise of an overbalancing gain" (*MW* 14:86). Thus, time spent working is always time cut out of a person's life, and working becomes "a form of postponed living".[12] Finally, when the workers are released after long hours of painful and boring labor, they seek out as "an escape mechanism ... any kind of enjoyment as long as it is cheap and 'exciting'" (*LW* 5:103). This is to be expected, Dewey pointed out, because the corollary to the basic belief that "work, productive activity, signifies action carried on for merely extraneous ends" is "the idea that happiness signifies surrender of mind to the thrills and excitations of the body ... " (*LW* 1:271).

Dewey's fourth major criticism of how capitalism was 'working' was that it functioned in an ultimately undemocratic fashion. By this, Dewey meant that political relations could not be expected to be equal

between members of "the leisure class ... the parasites" (*MW* 11:76), "the privileged class" (*PM* 77), and the vast majority of citizens "who have the minimum of control over the conditions of their own subsistence" (*PM* 41). It was Dewey's belief that it would be impossible to maintain democracy over time "if there is economic insecurity and economic dependence of great sections of the population if not upon the direct will of others, at least upon the conditions under which the employing sections of society operate" (*PM* 41-2). Because capitalism creates inegalitarian societies, and because the political functioning of inegalitarian societies is inherently undemocratic, Dewey believed that as long as our economic system remained as it was, our attempts at controlling the "over-lords" (*LW* 5:93), "the real rulers of the country"[13], would remain remedial. Changes had to occur: "if there is to be genuine and adequate democracy there must be a radical transformation of the present controls of production and distribution of goods and services ... " (*F&C* 76).

It is important to take note at this point that Dewey did not make use of one frequently offered and very powerful criticism of capitalism. This criticism is that capitalism is essentially unjust: that it is wrong for money to make money, that it is wrong for some people to profit through their investments from the labor of others. From Dewey's point of view, capitalism's operation in his society was unintelligent, wasteful, emotionally unsettling, communally destructive, psychologically damaging, anti-democratic, and so on. Capitalism was not, however, essentially unjust.

This is not to say that Dewey failed to condemn many particular situations in his society as unjust. But what was wrong with these situations was that the economically powerful were using their power to take more than their fair share. The point may be a subtle one, but it is important. When capitalism functioned unjustly it was wrong, but capitalism was not itself unjust. And Dewey held to this position even though he recognized that unrestrained capitalism almost always functions unjustly. The significance of this distinction will emerge below.

III

The shape of the reconstructed economy that Dewey advocated can be most simply described as a form of socialism, although there are many qualifications to be made. There are, as Dewey indicated, so many possible forms of socialism, so many possible roles for government, degrees of planning and popular control, *etc.*, "that it is all but impossible for us to say what 'socialism' really is ... ".[14] Socialism was, and remains, many competing - and even conflicting - schools of

thought and practice. Marxist Communism, one of these schools, was rejected by Dewey because he thought it contained in addition to its pledge to end the ills of contemporary capitalism the seeds of other and potentially worse problems.

Arguments current in Dewey's day in favor of Marxist Communism centered around the necessity for the Communist solution to the ills of capitalism - 'necessity' here in either of two senses. On the one hand, there were those individuals who asserted the scientific necessity of the eventual triumph of Communism because of the inevitable workings of historical materialism. Others viewed the necessity more as an ethical requirement of all moral agents. As one commentator from this second group noted, as long as there is no "realistic alternative program and path of action" to overcome capitalism, "criticism of the communist position - justified as it may appear to be from an abstract ideal position - [is] irrelevant ... ".[15] But, in either case, whether their opposition to capitalism was 'scientific' or 'moral', these supporters of Communism believed that it was going to be replaced.

Dewey opposed Marxist Communism for a number of reasons which can be separated into two groups, corresponding to these two senses of 'necessity'. Dewey rejected Marxist Communism first as the inevitable result of the dialectical process of history. He saw in such a theory a position that was foreign to America, fundamentally apriori, and as a consequence of its apriori nature not open to experience. Let us consider these criticisms in order.

Dewey condemned Marxist Communism as being somehow 'foreign' to the American condition. Although some might equate 'foreign' here with 'foreigners', that Communism was a philosophy for immigrants, Dewey was concerned with what he saw as the mechanical application, without any consideration of American idiosyncrasies, of categories and analyses alien to the American situation by a party "directly governed from Moscow" (*LW* 6:169). It is impossible, he wrote, to transfer Soviet Communism "to a country which is so profoundly different in its economic, political, and cultural history". Such Communism, he continued, "rests upon an almost entire neglect of the specific historical backgrounds and traditions which have operated to shape the patterns of thought and action in America".[16] As a consequence, Marxist Communism "does not speak the American idiom or think in terms relevant to the American situation ... " (*LW* 6:169). The result of attempts to foster it in America was to "divert attention and energy away from methods that are in harmony with American habits".[17]

Dewey's related condemnation of Marxist Communism as an apriori belief system was based in his understanding of it as a "monolithic theory of social action and social causation" which offered

"a ready-made answer for problems that present themselves" (*F&C* 100). Examples of applications of this philosophy of history would include the Marxists' emphasis upon economic determinism in "all forms of social activities and relations, political, legal, scientific, artistic, religious, moral" (*F&C* 77), their emphasis upon the inevitability of class struggle and revolution, and their belief that this catastrophic end of capitalism would be followed by what Dewey characterized as "a millennial period" (*MW* 11:91).

This last phrase was not out of place in Dewey's analysis because for him, "communism is itself a religious faith" having "a body of dogmas as fixed and unyielding as that of any church that ever existed" (*LW* 5:357, 356). Although the Marxist Communists' "prediction of a revolution in political control, caused by the general misery of the masses and resulting in the establishment of a socialistic society, has not been realized in this country" (*MW* 5:91), Dewey wrote, and seemed unlikely in the future, yet it continued to function in an apriori fashion as the keystone of Marxist thought. The Marxist remained confident in what Earl Browder called in 1933 "the objective truth of the monolithic Marxian system".[18]

Dewey continued that, besides being factually mistaken in its predictions, the confidence born of such apriori dogmas leads to unfortunate results. Primary among these results was the failure to examine our experiences and their particular causal conditions to determine specific causes and outcomes. If we have "a ready-made answer" (*F&C* 100) for our problems, we do not need to evaluate particular cases. If we know that all events have an economic cause - if all wars are economic in origin, if all discrimination is economic in origin - then we need not bother ourselves to consider the particular circumstances of particular cases. Because almost all problems in the modern world will present enough economic qualities to make this analysis at least *prima facie* plausible, whatever they are, our problems will be reduced to economic problems. Our attempts at solution will then be narrowed to simply solving these 'economic' problems; and thus our attempts will fail, Dewey wrote, because they will not satisfy "the need for continued resort to observation, and to continual revision of generalizations in their office of working hypotheses" (*F&C* 87).

This confidence in dogma led the Marxists, Dewey thought, to a lack of concern with the facts - especially when the facts did not conform to the Party line. The Party, Stalin noted, "alone knows where to direct the cause; and it is leading it forward successfully" due to the fact that "it is guided in its work by the tenets of Marx, Engels and Lenin. There cannot be any doubt that as long as we remain true to these tenets, as long as we have this compass, we will achieve successes in our work."[19] Equipped with such an infallible 'compass', what need did the Party have for considering contradictory evidence or

examining conflicting views? Why bother attempting to understand wrong answers, especially if they are rooted in capitalist ideology? However, for Dewey, "[f]air-play, elementary honesty in the representation of facts and especially of the opinions of others, are something more than 'bourgeois virtues'"[20] and disagreements with or criticisms of others' positions cannot be reduced to "a display of class-bias ... " (*F&C* 76). For Dewey, for whom the social situation was one of inquiry after solutions rather than struggle for victory, these virtues were a prerequisite to a successful long-term course of action.

Dewey's second line of criticism of the Marxists was directed against that stream of pro-Communist thought that saw the adoption of Communism as a moral necessity to be advanced regardless of other costs. Because the Party's efforts at advancing the Popular Front from 1935-39 brought a virtual halt to its revolutionary rhetoric, I shall focus here upon one unbending advocate of the voluntarist view: Leon Trotsky. Trotsky maintained that "[c]ivilization can be saved only by the socialist revolution", and therefore "[t]he welfare of the revolution ... is the supreme law!" To those like Dewey who rejected the class struggle and suggested the possibility of evolving toward a common good through peaceful means, Trotsky answered that the question of "who is to rule the country" will ultimately be answered "by the employment of all forms of violence". Consequently, for Trotsky, it is necessary to foster all those means

> which unite the revolutionary proletariat, fill their hearts with irreconcilable hostility to oppression, teach them contempt for official morality and its democratic echoers, imbue them with consciousness of their own historical mission, raise their courage and spirit of self-sacrifice in the struggle.

For him, any understanding of society which fails to see this is "counterrevolutionary".[21]

Dewey opposed "the essence" of the Marxist position: "the view that class warfare is the channel through which economic forces operate to effect social change and progress" (*F&C* 79), and the resultant emphasis upon setting up the dictatorship of the proletariat to pave the way toward 'true' Communist society. If we accept, he wrote, that there are "ultimately but three forces that control society - habit, coercive and violent force, and action directed by intelligence", and if we recognize that our present crises indicate that "habit and custom ... [have] ... in large measure ceased to operate", we are forced to decide between "violent force" and intelligent action as our method of reconstruction (*PM* 79). Even at the height of the Depression, he did not categorically advocate violent force.

Dewey rejected violence as an overall method because he felt that it

would not succeed in attaining its end. On the one hand, he believed that a violent class war would not bring about the desired end of a true social democracy. He believed that a "short-cut" to fundamental change could not work because it "fails to realize the full force of ... institutions as embodied habits". Consequently, even "abrupt and deep alterations in external customs" will not bring about such significant changes in "habits of thought and feeling". Rather, he wrote, "[a]ctual social change is never so great as apparent change" (*MW* 14:77). Actual social change is a slow and deliberate process which focusses upon modes of thought and feelings and creates institutions of co-operative inquiry. Abrupt violent change cannot do this.

On the other hand, such revolutions do have some clear results - results other than those desired. We must never be so confident of our means, Dewey wrote, "that it is not necessary to examine what the actual consequences of the use of chosen means will be". In this regard, Dewey was particularly concerned that the primary result of any such revolution in his time would be a social disaster. "A revolution effected solely or chiefly by violence can in a modernized society like our own result only in chaos", he wrote. "Not only would civilization be destroyed but the things necessary for bare life."[22] Because of "the much greater interdependence of all the elements of society" in the contemporary world, such a revolution would entail "the ruin of all parties and the destruction of civilized life" (*LSA* 83-4), a situation far worse, Dewey thought, than the admitted injustice of our present situation. The victory of Marxist Communism in America would be, at best, "a Pyrrhic victory".[23]

In the face of claims like the following by M. J. Olgin that "the civil war is the inevitable outcome of long and arduous struggles against the capitalists and their State" and that "there is only one way to abolish the capitalist State, and that is to smash it by force"[24], Dewey suggested that we reject "the monstrous belief" that class struggle civil war is a means of social progress (*MW* 14:187). More strongly still does he reject "class war as *the* means by which such conflicts can be eliminated and genuine social advance made". It is, he tells us, one claim - and, under all but extraordinary circumstances, a dubious one - "to say that class struggle is a means of attaining the end of liberation of mankind". It is yet another "to say that there is an absolute *law* of class struggle which determines the means to be used".[25] And, for Dewey, "even if it be admitted to hold of the past, the conclusion that violence is the method now to be depended upon does not follow ... " (*LSA* 82).

Dewey also condemned the voluntaristic version of Marxism as anti-democratic and totalitarian because of its emphasis upon the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat. He wrote, for example,

> official Communism has made the practical traits of the dictatorship

> *of* the proletariat and *over* the proletariat, the suppression of the civil liberties of all non-proletarian elements as well as of dissenting proletarian minorities, integral parts of the standard Communist faith and dogma.[26]

And indeed we find in Trotsky, for example, the admission that anyone "who repudiates the dictatorship of the proletariat repudiates the Socialist revolution, and digs the grave of Socialism".[27] Dewey wrote that the Marxists' claim that such measures were necessary to reach 'true' socialism were false. He, on the other hand, believed that "[*t*]*he fundamental principle of democracy is that the ends of freedom and individuality for all can be attained only by means that accord with those ends*".[28] The tendency of certain forms of socialism to become totalitarian was an indication to Dewey that "[n]either theory nor practical experience has yet shown that state socialism will be essentially different from state capitalism", both being forms of government which are fundamentally anti-democratic (*F&C* 71). Moreover, he wrote, such a dictatorship tends to continue indefinitely: "the seizure of political power by force signifies the continued maintenance of power by force with its continued suppression of the most precious freedoms of the individual spirit".[29]

IV

The key emphases that run through Dewey's presentation of his own socialism, as we might expect from what we have just seen, are democracy and inquiry. (Readers who find these values to be central in Marx' work will find some interesting parallels here). In the place of the dogmatic understanding of human history and economic progress that he saw in Marxism, with its predetermined revolution and its predetermined end state, Dewey advocated experimentation, planning and co-ordination. In the place of the dictatorship by the Party, Dewey advocated a situation in which political action was "a cooperative undertaking, one which rests upon persuasion, upon ability to convince and be convinced by reason ... " (*MW* 10:404).

We see underlying this approach two assumptions that are significant for the nature of Dewey's socialism. The first was that his society's situation, as bad as it admittedly was, was the result of recent mistakes and failures to adjust, not of the inexorable flow of historical processes. The American people had fallen asleep and were now suffering for it. Secondly, Dewey believed that, however bad we had allowed things to become, it was highly likely that we could, without revolution, correct our situation. "Even as they now exist", he wrote, "the forms of representative government are potentially capable of

expressing the public will when that assumes anything like unification" (*LSA* 85-6). Even though he recognized in 1933, for example, that "[p]ower today resides in control of the means of production, exchange, publicity, transportation and communication", rather than in the hands of "the nominal government", and that "[i]n order to restore democracy, one thing and one thing only is essential. The people will rule when they have power, and they will have power in the degree they own and control the land, banks, the producing and distributing agencies of the nation", Dewey offered no call to revolution. "Discontent with democracy as it operates under conditions of exploitation by special interests has justification", Dewey wrote in 1939. The process of democracy at present, he continued, "labors under many and serious handicaps imposed by the undemocratic character of what passes for democracy".[30] But still it was not time for revolution because his understanding of the nature of American society and its dormant democracy was based upon a theory of class structure different from that of the Marxists.

Dewey's understanding of the nature of class structure begins with the assertion that his society contained many overlapping interest groups or classes by means of which individuals give expression to their common interests: "there are as many associations as there are goods which are enhanced by being mutually communicated and participated in" (*MW* 12:197). And, even though it might be possible to separate society - to a large extent - into buyers and sellers of labor-power, Dewey does not accept the claim that there is an essential or key class in which a person's primary identity should be sought.

In complex but radically individualized modern society, Dewey believed, although the interests of these various groups are in a large degree interdependent, individuals tend to lose sight of the larger good in their attempts to advance their personal well-being. This process of forgetting the common good is enhanced by the real problem of actual conflicts between particular groups and individuals, and by social movements that would advocate the escalation of the conflicts that exist. Societal development is a process of change; there are always problems to address; "there is always an adjustment to be made ... "(*LSA* 49). We are always in a state of imbalance in which some group - economic, religious, racial, geographical - has too much power. The question is: what is the method which is most likely to redress these imbalances? For Dewey, this question becomes one of determining "*how* conflicting claims are to be settled in the interest of the widest possible contribution to the interests of all - or at least of the great majority" (*LSA* 79). His answer here is a re-emphasis upon democracy and a specific rejection of class struggle. The method of class struggle he saw as "the erection of actual human beings into fixed entities called classes, having no overlapping interests" (*LSA* 80), "no common ground, no moral

understanding, no agreed upon standard of appeal" (*MW* 14:59). Consequently, no common outlook among these groups will be possible; and any compromise will be seen as at least partial surrender to the enemy. In this way, Dewey noted, the approach of the Marxists "has increased the significance of class struggles".[31]

However, if we emphasize interdependence and interconnection, if we concentrate on the larger whole, if we attempt "to discover some more comprehensive point of view" (*MW* 9:336), some of these conflicts could be ameliorated and others prevented. The "stratification" of society "into separate classes" could be decreased, Dewey thought, by the attempt to expand community through a "greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control" and through "freer interaction between social groups ... [and] ... change in social habit ... " (*MW* 9:92-3). This would be possible, however, only if we turned away from the call for victory over our opponents and away from an emphasis upon treating each adversary as evil, as "a wilful violator of moral principles" (*MW* 14:59). Dewey wanted society to turn toward genuine compromise, toward "the mediation of social transitions" (*LSA* 48), toward "adjusting groups and individuals to one another" (*LW* 2:355). The glory of democracy, Dewey thought, why it was worth the effort to try to attain it, was that it was able to recognize conflicts and to "bring these conflicts out into the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised ... " (*LSA* 79). By means of a vibrant democracy's power to bring these conflicts into the open, it is able to keep up pressure for resolution without necessarily resorting to violence.

Dewey was willing to admit that this emphasis upon developing community cannot guarantee that all social problems will be resolved in a satisfactory fashion without violence. His claim was rather that the advantages of this method will outweigh, in the long run, those of the method of class struggle. He wrote that "genuine interdependence of means and ends does not automatically rule out class struggle as one means for attaining the end". What it rules out is the claim that class struggle is "the *only* means".[32] At times, even after "the unremitting use of every method of intelligence that conditions permit" (*PM* 139), we may decide that force is necessary to restrain some "recalcitrant minority" (*LSA* 87) from opposing the great majority. But, despite unending complaints from Marxists that reformism leads only to compromise and continued exploitation and that the reformists themselves are "the staunchest supporters of the capitalist robbers and the most active promoters of imperialist wars", Dewey continually reiterated that the time for violence had not yet come. It was still possible that the dormant democracy would awaken and act. It was still possible that "instead of using social power to ameliorate the evil consequences of the existing system", his society would, without

violent revolution, "use social power to change the system".[33]

Turning from a consideration of the means by which changes would be enacted to a consideration of the changes themselves, we find that Dewey's general method of presenting his social philosophy did not emphasize the elaboration of the programmatic suggestions that he thought should be enacted. His interest remained focussed on procedures for developing a vibrant democracy.[34] Still, we can point to a series of fundamental, interrelated themes that run through his work.

The first of the changes he advocated was increased attention to the problems of ordinary citizens in an attempt to foster the deliberate advancement of the common good. In the struggle with the traditionally accepted rights of property, Dewey wrote, it was necessary to reassert the principle that "the control of any individual or group over their 'own' property is relative to public wants, and that public requirements may at any time be given precedence by public machinery devised for that purpose" (*MW* 11:102; cf. *LW* 5:87, 95-6; *LSA* 76). With Jefferson, we must give "supremacy to personal rights when they come into conflict with property rights" (*F&C* 162). For Dewey, this principle foretold the ultimate replacement of capitalism as he knew it because "the introduction of social responsibility into our business system" would have to spell "the doom of an exclusively pecuniary-profit industry ... " (*MW* 5:98). One key reason for this was that such responsibility would include commitment to full employment. A decent society must offer, Dewey wrote, "the guarantee of the right, to every individual who is capable of it, to work - not the mere legal right, but a right which is enforceable so that the individual will always have the opportunity to engage in some form of useful activity ... " (*MW* 11:83). To make this possible would require "establishing social conditions which will make it possible for all who are capable to do socially productive work ... ".[35] Whatever economic costs might be incurred by such changes would be more than balanced off by the enhancement of the common good, both in the sense of "material security and plenty" and further of the "release [of] human energy for pursuit of higher values" (*LSA* 90).

A second fundamental theme of Dewey's socialism was the necessity for a deliberate reconstruction of the working experience itself to make it more intellectually stimulating, more aesthetically fulfilling and more socially involved. The basis of these changes was Dewey's belief that "[t]he ultimate problem of production is the production of human beings".[36] This meant, to begin, a deliberate attempt on the part of society to turn away from jobs that are mentally deadening toward the recognition of and emphasis upon what Dewey called "the *intellectual* value of labor" (*MW* 10:142). This could be done by aiming at increasing "on the part of every worker his sense of the meaning of the activities that he is carrying on, so that more of his own

ideas, thinking, will go into it" (*LW* 5:240). Workers can get "true freedom of mind only when they can exercise their minds in connection with their daily occupations" (*MW* 12:9). Achieving this sort of work would mean changing the nature of the jobs so that the educator's desire to help the worker find "within his daily work all there is in it of large and human significance" (*MW* 1:16) would be neither futile nor manipulative but rather a real possibility.

To make work more aesthetically fulfilling, Dewey advocated a movement away from pursuits "fixed by accident and necessity of circumstance" (*MW* 9:143), away from situations in which work "signifies action carried on for merely extraneous ends," toward an integration of "means and consequence ..., the instrumental and the consummatory" (*LW* 1:271). Finally, this reconstruction of working must develop the workers' positions, and consciousness of those positions, with regard to the social ends of the community. Our goal must be that "every person shall be occupied in something which makes the lives of others better worth living, and which accordingly makes the ties which bind persons together more perceptible ... " (*MW* 9:326). Changes in the working experience like these three would go a long way towards fulfilling Dewey's requirement that "industry must itself become a primary educative and cultural force for those engaged in it" (*MW* 5:105).

The third fundamental theme that we find recurring in Dewey's social writings is his advocacy of the democratic management of our economic system. Dewey was emphatic here that it was necessary to grant to workers "a responsible share in the management of activities" (*MW* 12:9). Such "cooperative control" (*LW* 5:104) might entail

> a kind of conjoined supervision and regulation, with supervisors and arbiters, as it were, to look after the public interests, the interests of the consumer, the interests of the population as a whole, others to represent those who have their capital immediately invested, and others to represent those who have their lives (in the form of work) immediately invested (*MW* 11:85).

This system could evolve, over time, into "a federation of self-governing industries with the government as adjuster and arbiter rather than as direct owner and manager ... ". (*MW* 11:105). Or perhaps the co-operative control would entail a larger governmental role under which the people would both own and control: "the socialization of all natural resources and natural monopolies, of ground rent, and of basic industries".[37] Circumstances would determine the approach that was appropriate. The key for Dewey was industrial democracy as a method; the outcome itself will have to be shaped by future individuals facing particular situations.

V

The preceding has been an initial attempt to lay out, in a historical manner, Dewey's relationship to Marx and to Marxism as he understood them. This material is important to keep in mind in any attempt to understand Dewey's work, or the larger social situation in which he was working. This material is not of solely historical significance, however, because its philosophical import carries over into our examination of contemporary social situations and into our relationship with Marx and with contemporary Marxism, here and abroad. One of the themes underlying much of what we have seen that is still of extreme importance can be found in the following pair of questions: should we choose a primary social value under which to live our lives; and, if so, what should it be? A second on-going theme can be found in this question: how should we understand our opponents in the struggle for a better society? Let us explore these two themes in some detail.

Beginning with the former, should we adopt some social value as primary; and, if so, what value should it be? In October of 1932, The League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford offered the following evaluation of that year's upcoming Presidential choice: "There is only one issue in the present election. Call it hard times, unemployment, the farm problem, the world crisis, or call it simply hunger ... ." The choice presented to the American voters in that election could be reduced to one question: which candidate and which party will bring economic justice to America? Which will address "the issue of social reorganization" to deal with the "catastrophic economic collapse"? Which will act without hindrance from the monied classes to bring immediate relief and economic equality to the underprivileged and exploited? Compared to the matter of social justice, the League maintained, all other matters were of secondary import. The essentially unjust capitalist system had to end: "we call upon all men and women ... to join in the revolutionary struggle against capitalism under the leadership of the Communist Party. *Vote Communist* ... ".[38]

This claim that there was only one issue in the 1932 Presidential election suggestively points to a fundamental difference between Dewey and the Marxists, at least as he understood them. For Dewey, social justice was an important political matter: he was concerned that all the members of the society receive a fair share of the benefits of participating in a highly integrated economic system and that they all bear their fair share of its burdens. He recognized that neither of these was happening with sufficient regularity and he said so repeatedly. But, for Dewey, justice was not the primary consideration of his social

writing and action. Justice was not the primary social value, as it was for the Marxists who wanted above all else to bring an end to what they saw as the essentially unjust system of capitalism. A more important value, for Dewey, was democracy: the participation of all individuals in the various political and economic decisions that influenced their lives.

We may want to dispute this distinction and maintain that neither justice nor democracy can be attained or retained without the other. But for both Dewey and the Marxists this was not true. For the Marxists, the creation of a just, egalitarian society through the destruction of capitalism was the necessary prelude to effective and lasting democracy. For Dewey, justice could be established and defended only if the political system was antecedently democratic.

The view of those for whom ending the injustice of capitalism was the primary issue is summed up quite well in the following 1942 comment by Paul Sweezy:

> We cannot ask: Given a certain class structure, how will the various classes, with their divergent and often conflicting interests, manage to get along together? We must ask: How did a particular class structure come into being and by what means is its continued existence guaranteed?[39]

It is this evil class structure, rooted in an unjust economic system, that must be eliminated. Once it has been destroyed and the egalitarian society created, true democracy will emerge. Our job, under such an analysis, is simply to end capitalism by the fastest and most effective means available: class struggle and revolution.

There were three fundamental reasons for Dewey's dissent. The first and most obvious was that Dewey feared the costs of civil war - the victory over capitalism would be, as we have seen, "Pyrrhic". The second reason was also considered above: Dewey did not believe that capitalism was essentially unjust. It needed to be brought under control immediately, but not necessarily eliminated immediately. Since Dewey did not see the future existence of capitalism to be 'guaranteed', American society could continue to live with it for a while as it evolved democratically into socialism. The third and most basic reason that Dewey offered for rejecting revolution was that he did not believe that the violent elimination of capitalism would end social conflicts. Consider in this regard Olgin's position that the dictatorship of the proletariat "*does away with exploitation and oppression forever*", or Stalin's 1934 report that in the Soviet Union "[t]he elimination of parasitic classes has led to the disappearance of the exploitation of man by man".[40] From Dewey's point of view such claims, although perhaps true by definition in the Marxist schema with which he was familiar, addressed only one type of social conflict. Adjustments would

still be necessary between and among the various groups in the new society, and maintaining an ongoing balance would require strong and well-rooted democratic institutions and habits. The Marxists, Dewey believed, neither took this problem seriously nor found in the Soviet model any need to. If the Party must lead the workers by means of the dictatorship of the proletariat until complete victory has been won - to cite V. I. Lenin: if the Party is to be "the teacher, guide and leader of all the toiling and exploited ...", if the workers are themselves capable of creating "only trade unionism", if the Party must ever struggle to prevent "constant relapses among the proletariat into petty-bourgeois spinelessness ... ", and if "absolute centralisation and the strictest discipline of the proletariat are one of the fundamental conditions for victory over the bourgeoisie"[41] - then the Party must decide what adjustments are necessary and should not listen to dissenting views. From such a perspective, dissent can be seen in no way other than as 'deviationism'.

If we do not accept, however, as Dewey did not, the position that the elimination of capitalism would mean an elimination of social conflicts, then how are we to contribute our opinions and defend our interests after the overthrowing of capitalism? Let us focus exclusively on the economic realm. After we take control of the economy out of private hands, into whose hands is it to pass, Dewey asks, especially if we believe that "the public has no hands except those of individual human beings" (*LW* 2:286)? How are we to know that the new hands into which this economic power is to be given, Dewey wonders, "are so controlled that they are reasonably sure to work in behalf of public ends" (*F&C* 71)? This was not meant by Dewey to be the blanket criticism of all attempts at socialism that we often hear at present. Rather it was a specific question to be put to any particular attempt at socialization. The "final outcome" of any revolution, he wrote, "does not depend upon the original abrupt revolutionary occurrence but upon the way intelligent action intervenes at each step of its course ... ".[42] If Dewey is correct in his analysis, then simply eliminating capitalism is not the answer. How we eliminate capitalism is more important. Institutions and habits of democratic interaction must be in place first; and, consequently, democracy should be our primary social value.

The second significant on-going theme in Dewey's writings on social change has to do with our understanding of our opponents in the struggles for a better world. To repeat his view, society finds itself beset with conflicts and problems. In particular, the progress of society toward certain social goals has lagged behind what was possible due to the fact that intellectual and moral ideas favorable to capitalism continue to function in society and defend the higher status of the few. However, if we modify our educational systems to make them more democratic, if we foster "the habit of amicable cooperation"[43] and

"organized cooperative inquiry" (*LSA* 71), it would be possible to overcome much of this social lag and move closer to a resolution of our social problems.

Opponents of Dewey's position here tend to locate the source of these social problems in the evil of the capitalists whose exploitation of the majority is not accidental nor due to lag, but deliberate and calculated and brutally defended. Those who are benefitting from the current social situation intend to continue benefitting, not so much because (as Dewey suggests) traditional moral outlooks justify them, but because of their own selfishness and their moral blindness to the evil they are causing. Dewey's opponents thus suggest that attempts to reason with these individuals through "cooperative inquiry" will only allow them to continue in their privileged status. Efforts at "amicable cooperation" will only result in the manipulation of the sincere by the wily. As C. Wright Mills wrote, "[t]he concept of action in Dewey obviously does not cover the kinds of action occurring within and between struggling, organized political parties ... . They are organizations for social fighting."[44] Dewey does not see our relation to our opponents, except in the one case described above, as social fighting.

What is necessary to end this injustice, the critics maintain, as we saw above with Trotsky, is class struggle; and class struggle has less to do with co-operative inquiry than with partisanship. Consider the following words of Reinhold Niebuhr from 1932:

> Contending factions in a social struggle require morale; and morale is created by the right dogmas, symbols and emotionally potent oversimplifications ... . No class of industrial workers will ever win freedom from the dominant classes if they give themselves completely to the "experimental techniques" of the modern educators. They will have to believe rather more firmly in the justice and in the probable triumph of their cause, than any impartial science would give them the right to believe, if they are to have enough energy to contest the power of the strong.

Liberalism, Niebuhr had written earlier, "lacks the spirit of enthusiasm, not to say fanaticism, which is so necessary to move the world out of its beaten tracks".[45] The effect of the Deweyian approach, as Earl Browder wrote in 1933, would be to cripple the workers' struggle: "The only effect of the influence of this ideological system upon the working class is a very poisonous one, to create hesitation, indecision, hesitation again, more indecision, wait and see, wait and see."[46] To attain the necessary level of unhesitating commitment, we must foster hatred - see our opponents as personally evil - and make our goal fighting for power.

The criticism of Dewey can be reduced, without too much cost, to

the question of whether institutional lag or deliberate exploitation was the primary source of our social problems. And, since our problems have persisted, this is a question that we can ask ourselves now. Our answer to this question will go a long way towards answering the question of how we should treat our opponents in the struggle for a better world. It will also have fundamental implications for the question of advocating justice or democracy.

The centrality of the distinction between lag and exploitation goes far beyond the concepts themselves to an evaluation of two fundamentally different understandings of human nature and human interaction. On the one hand, we have Dewey's complex of social lag which prevents the development of the common good but which can be overcome by the democratic interaction of citizens to move toward a progressively more just society. On the other, we have the Marxists' complex of the exploitation of the many by the few which brings about the need for fostering an exclusive class morality and the class struggle to establish the kind of economic equality which will eventually result in a truly democratic society. To the extent that the exigencies of political action forced the choice, each side was willing to forego in the interim an important social value - Dewey, justice; the Marxists, democracy - in the hope that focussing on another social value - Dewey, democracy; the Marxists, justice - would lead eventually to the achievement of the former. To the extent that the exigencies of political action are still forcing a choice, we too must decide: should we begin with democracy or justice?

One final point. I hope that readers have noticed that I have not quoted Marx directly even once in this entire discussion of Dewey's understanding of Marx and Marxism. I do not think that I have been unfair to Marx in presenting him in this way, at least in this volume to this audience. Its readers will be familiar with other, richer understandings of Marx and his work, and more critical than Dewey was in evaluating the claims of various individuals to be 'Marxists'. My purpose in this second-hand presentation of Marx has been to replicate a context in which Marx was presented indirectly. As Walter Lippmann wrote, "[f]or the study of politics I should say unhesitatingly that it is more important to know what socialist leaders, stump speakers, pamphleteers, think Marx meant, than to know what he said. For then you are dealing with living ideas ... ".[47] If we understand 'politics' in the broad sense that Lippmann intended, and 'living' ideas to mean not 'important' or 'vital' ideas but ideas 'currently in the air', then to attempt to grasp Dewey's understanding of Marx and Marxism, it was necessary to present the Marx with which Dewey was familiar.

Clearly, Dewey's situation is not ours. If we hope to integrate the valuable insights of Dewey's work into our current practice, we need to integrate his thought with our understanding of other major figures,

including Marx. Before we can do this, however, we need to have a better understanding of the historical context of Dewey's work. I hope I have contributed to this understanding.

NOTES

1. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1950, p. 26; Wells, *Pragmatism: Philosophy of Imperialism*, NY, International, 1954, p. 132.

2. Eastman, 'John Dewey', *Atlantic Monthly* (December 1941), p. 682.

3. In this paper, I have used the following abbreviations for the works of Dewey that reappear frequently: *F&C - Freedom and Culture*, NY, Capricorn, [1939] 1963; *LSA - Liberalism and Social Action*, NY, Capricorn, [1935], 1963]; *LW - The Later Works, 1925-1953*, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1981- , 8 volumes so far; *MW - The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1976-1983, 15 volumes; *PM - Problems of Men*, NY, Philosophical Library, 1946.

4. Dewey, *Lectures on Psychological and Political Ethics, 1898*, Donald F. Koch, editor, NY, Hafner, 1976, pp. 399-400; *Lectures in China, 1919-1920*, Robert W. Clopton and Tsuin-Chen Ou, editors, Honolulu, University Press of Hawaii, 1973, pp. 117-24.

5. Mead, *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, Merritt H. Moore, editor, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1936, p. 240; cf. Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Politics*, NY, Macmillan, [1913], 1933, pp. 213-4, 238-9.

6. The early material first appeared in the four volumes: *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, und Ferdinand Lasalle*, edited by Franz Mehring, Stuttgart, Deitz, 1902. The Marx and Engels material reappeared in the three volumes of *Gessamelte Schriften von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels, 1841 bis 1850*, Stuttgart, Dietz, 1913. The Marx and Engels *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (*MEGA*, Frankfurt, Berlin Moscow, 1927-1935) began with some of Marx' early writings. *Marx-Engels, Selected Writings* (*MESW*, NY, International, 1935-6) rendered some of this material into English. The *Manuscripts* themselves first appeared in *MEGA* I/3, Berlin, 1932, with a complete English translation only years later: Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959; NY, International, 1964. Significant as well was Marx' *Grundrisse* which, although written in the late 1850s, was only published in German between 1939 and 1941, and translated into English in 1973.

7. Dewey, 'A Great American Prophet', *Common Sense*, III (April 1934), pp. 6-7.

8. Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism*, in *Works*, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953, VI (1924), p. 73.

9. Alex Bittleman, 'Some Problems Before the Tenth Convention of the Communist Party', *The Communist,* XVII (July 1938), p. 628.

10. Browder, *The People's Front,* NY, International, 1938, p. 289.

11. Dewey, *Theory of Valuation*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, [1939], 1966, p. 61; cf. *MW* 14:88; *LSA* 75.

12. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, NY, Minton, Balch, 1934, p. 27.

13. Dewey, 'The Imperative Need for a New Radical Party', *Common Sense*, II (September 1933), p. 6.

14. Dewey, *Lectures in China*, p. 118.

15. Sidney Hook, 'Why I *Am* a Communist: Communism Without Dogmas', *Modern Monthly*, VIII (April 1934), p. 145; cf. Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx: A Revolutionary Interpretation*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1933, pp. 248-9.

16. Dewey, 'Why I Am Not a Communist', *Modern Monthly,* VIII (April 1934), p. 135.

17. Dewey, 'The Basis for Hope', *Common Sense*, VIII (December 1939), p. 10.

18. Browder, 'The Revisionism of Sidney Hook' (Part One), *The Communist*, XII (February 1933), p. 146.

19. Stalin, 'Report to the 17th Party Congress' [26 January 1934], *Selected Writings*, NY, International, 1942, p. 359.

20. Dewey, 'Why I Am Not a Communist', p. 137.

21. Trotsky, 'The Moralists and Sycophants against Marxism', [1939], *Their Morals and Ours: Marxist vs. Liberal Views on Morality*, George Novack, editor, NY, Pathfinder Press, 1973, p. 65; *Terrorism and Communism*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, [1920], 1961, p. 54; 'Their Morals and Ours', [1938], *Their Morals and Ours*, pp. 49, 37.

22. Dewey, 'Means and Ends', [1938], *Their Morals and Ours*, p. 69; 'Why I Am Not a Communist', p. 137.

23. Dewey, 'Why I Am Not a Communist', p. 137.

24. Olgin, *Why Communism? Plain Talks on Vital Problems*, NY, Workers Library, 1933, pp. 62, 46.

25. Dewey, 'Why I Am Not a Communist', p. 136; 'Means and Ends', p. 71.

26. Dewey, 'Why I Am Not a Communist', p. 135.

27. Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism*, p. 23.

28. Dewey, 'Democracy is Radical', *Common Sense*, VI (January 1937), p. 11.

29. Dewey, 'The Economic Basis of the New Society', *Intelligence in the Modern World*, Joseph Ratner, editor, NY, Modern Library, 1939, p. 432.

30. Dewey, 'The Imperative Need for a New Radical Party', p. 6; 'The Future of Liberalism or The Democratic Way of Change', *What is Democracy?* , Norman, Cooperative Books, 1939, p. 10; cf. *PM* 119; *LW* 6: 149, 176; 'Why I Am Not a Communist', p. 136.

31. Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry,* NY, Holt, 1938, p. 237.

32. Dewey, 'Means and Ends', p. 71.

33. Olgin, *Why Communism?*, pp. 45-6; Dewey 'The Future of Liberalism or The Democratic Way of Change', p. 9.

34. For a discussion of this aspect of Dewey's social thought, cf. my 'Dewey's Method of Social Reconstruction', *Trans. of the C.S. Peirce Society*, XX (Fall 1984), pp. 363-93.

35. Dewey, 'The Economic Basis of the New Society', p. 428.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 430.

37. Dewey, 'No Half Way House for America', *People's Lobby Bulletin*, IV (November 1934), p. 1.

38. *Culture and the Crisis*, NY, Workers Library, 1932, pp. 5, 17, 30.

39. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development*, NY, Monthly Review Press, [1942], 1956, p. 241.

40. Olgin, *Why Communism?*, p. 81; Stalin, 'Report to the 17th Party Congress', p. 331.

41. Lenin, *State and Revolution* [1918], in *Selected Works*, 12 volumes, NY, International, 1938, VII, p. 26; *What Is To Be Done?* [1902], *ibid.*, II, p. 112; *Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder* [1920], *ibid.*, X, pp. 84, 60-1.

42. Dewey, 'Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder', *The Philosophy of John Dewey,* Paul A. Schilpp, editor, LaSalle, Open Court, [1939], 1951, p. 593.

43. Dewey, 'Creative Democracy - The Task before Us', *The Philosopher of the Common Man*, NY, Putnams, 1940, pp. 225-6.

44. Mills, *Sociology and Pragmatism: The Higher Learning in America*, Irving L. Horowitz, editor, NY, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 394.

45. Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*, NY, Scribners, [1932], 1960, p. xv; 'The Twilight of Liberalism', *New Republic* (14 June 1919), p. 218.

46. Browder, 'The Revisionism of Sidney Hook' (Part Two), *The Communist*, XII (March 1933), p. 293.

47. Lippmann, *A Preface to Politics*, p. 237.

PETER T. MANICAS

Philosophy and Politics: A Historical Approach to Marx and Dewey

If we begin with the political calamities of the last one hundred years and add, as at least part consequence of these, the upheavals in philosophy, literature, art and science, we can appreciate the present attractiveness of a political philosophy without foundations: There is no truth; only an endless "conversation" in a self-sufficient linguistic realm which is totally disconnected from any extra-linguistic reality - if such there be. Because God is dead, "human nature" has no content, and history is meaningless, the dream of creating a new kind of human society - the dream of utopian and revolutionary modern politics - is instead a nightmare. There is no knowable, objective, definable, transmittable common good; there are only "interests", not to be judged, still less to be accommodated. There is no responsible politics which is not impotent: Either we irresponsibly offer "the masses" ungrounded hope or, more responsibly, we reject the quest for "glittering triumph", perhaps even improvement, and settle for "the far more modest, though indispensable, concern to prevent 'catastrophes'". On this view of things, the belief that "everything is possible seems to have proved only that everything can be destroyed", that efforts "to escape from the grimness of the present into nostalgia for a still intact past, or into the anticipated oblivion of a better future, are vain".[1] With Camus, anguishing over Algeria, we may wonder how one can even write, knowing that what is said might provide an alibi for a Pol Pot or a terrorist willing to throw - or drop - a bomb.

The alternatives would seem to be these: Either one knows what is good and true, or one does not. If one does, then, must not one act on that knowledge, even if, finally, it turns out that one is wrong? On the other hand, if one does not know what is good and true, if perhaps there is no good and true, then, must we not be unwilling to act in the name of "the people", or history, or of our ideals? Instead, is it not the case that our commitment must be but to keep the conversation going?[2]

As "liberal", the anti-foundationalist alternative has an appeal. Indeed, it is just this which makes it a useful counter-revolutionary ideology. But the issue is misformulated. It is not that there is no basis for human solidarity - even if that basis is not to be discovered but created, nor that there is no "truth", even if like solidarity, it too is a social product. Nor is violence, as such, the problem. Like inaction, it is sometimes justified and sometimes not justified. For, unnoticed by

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the anti-foundationalist is the possibility of a politics which needs no foundations, a politics which does not guarantee success and does not presuppose that some person or party has a truth not shared by those in whose name they act. Put in other terms, the problem of modern politics is less the lack of "foundations" and more the absence of a genuinely democratic politics, a politics which aims at the creation of communities by the active participation of interdependent individuals, a politics in which "interests" become shared goods, a politics which insists that truth can only be our truth. In what follows, I argue that Marx and Dewey offered versions of this. On this view, we are "sculptors" or crafters, but we lack blueprints. On this view, we are actors in history, but we can - and must - write our own scripts.

I. RECOVERING MARX

Marx had some clear and definite ideas about democracy, ideas which remain unrealized, but which cannot be dismissed as utopian or as youthful extravagances or cynical subterfuge. Marx consistently held that participatory democracy was the goal of revolutionary transformation, that what we call modern democracy, though a form of alienated politics, was genuinely progressive, and finally - and most critically - that there could be no separation of revolutionary means from revolutionary ends. While the issues are contentious, I want to suggest that opposing views depend largely on an ahistorical reading of important texts and events. Critical in this regard is the persistent tendency to construe Marx' politics in terms of a misconstrual of the differences between Marx and the anarchists and to be anachronistic as regards later debates between revolutionary Marxists and social democrats.[3]

II. MARX' ANALYSIS OF THE DEMOCRATIC STATE

Characteristically, Marx' point of departure was criticism of Hegel, but while he rejected much in Hegel, he also found much of value. Hegel saw that the French Revolution had raised the problem of sovereignty in a critical way and that it was this problem with which "history is now occupied, and whose solution it has to work out in the future".[4] The problem was critical, because in the fully developed modern state the people could not be sovereign. On Hegel's view of the matter, "'the sovereignty of the people' is one of the confused notions based on the wild idea of the 'people'". "Taken without its monarch and the articulation of the whole ... the people is a formless mass and no longer a state."[5]

In the fully developed modern state, there was a bifurcation of civil society and the state. Individuals lived private lives and related anonymously. It was thus that, unless articulated, the people were a "formless mass". On the other hand, the government - the king, parliament, the bureaucracy and the police - became the mode by which "the whole" was articulated and expressed. Failing to grasp the full force of the American "solution" to the problem of sovereignty, Hegel opted for a reactionary solution, a constitutional monarchy.

Marx agreed fully with the Hegelian analysis of the bifurcation of civil society and the state, but he saw also that the Americans had, in a remarkable way, already solved the problem which Hegel believed had still to be solved. That is, Marx saw that the fully realized modern state would be a democratic state. The "solution", however, required that in the fully realized modern state, the alienation of individuals would be fully realized and at the same time fully obscured. In the democratic state, every adult is a "citizen" with full civil and political rights. Moreover, in virtue of the mechanisms of representative government, the people are "sovereign". But for Marx the reality was otherwise: Each citizen is "an imagined member of an imagined sovereignty, divested of his actual individual life and endowed with an unactual universality". In the democratic state, "liberators reduce citizenship, the political community, to a mere means for preserving [the] so-called rights of man". "But this means man in his uncivilized and unsocial aspect, in his fortuitous existence and just as he is, corrupted by the entire organization of our society, lost and alienated from himself, oppressed by inhuman relations and elements."[6]

To say that in the democratic state individuals are "uncivilized" and "unsocial" and that they have "fortuitous existences" is not to say that individuals are barbaric, or nasty or motivated by greed - though this may also be true. It is to say rather that they live private lives, that they are isolated, that they relate anonymously, that their situations are "accidental" like their sex or race, and that while their powers are social, they are not socially realized. This is the result of "the entire organization of society", but in particular of the market structure of bourgeois society and the alienating structures of the modern state. As Thomas points out, "the state becomes a fetishistic personification of political potential, very much as the concept of capital designates the separation between the conditions of labor and the producer. Both are the members of society's own, real force set up against them, opposed to them, and out of control."[7] "The people" are sovereign but they have no power over the conditions of their lives. As sovereigns in an illusory community, they are in reality controlled by "inhuman relations". A number of critical implications flow from Marx' analysis.

First, the problem for Marx is first and last political, of what has to

be done and to happen if people are to gain control of the circumstances - now alienated - which structure their lives. This problem was not to be solved "economistically" nor by perfecting the instrumentalities of the democratic state. This distinguished Marx' view from *e.g.*, Proudhon on the one hand, and on the other, from republicans. Second, to achieve the goal is to overcome the duality of civil society and the state, and this means, as Marx writes, that "in true democracy, the political state disappears (*untergeht*)". This view, of course, has its Rousseauian intimations and suggests the critical point of comparison to nineteenth-century anarchisms and social democrats. But third, in contrast to anarchisms which share with Marx the idea that state power must be broken, if this was to be achieved, it had to be achieved by an agency which did not reflect the alienated relations of private property. As he wrote, it was the work of "a class with radical chains, a class in civil society that is not of civil society, a class that is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere of society having a universal character because of its universal suffering".[8]

These ideas lead directly to the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* where, recurring to the Aristotelian lineage of the idea that democracy was class rule by the poor, Marx and Engels write that "the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to establish democracy". In this democracy, to be sure, "the political state" has not disappeared, for as a statist form, this democracy was still a "dictatorship", albeit a dictatorship of the majority, the proletariat, against the minority - the owners of the means of production. It was thus that it was but "a first step in the revolution of the working class".[9]

But it was the Paris Commune of 1871 which seems to have given Marx a paradigm for what might be, a paradigm which, prefigured in actuality, has earlier intimations of "true democracy". As he said, the democracy of the Commune was a "historically new creation" and "the glorious harbinger of a new society".[10] Still, it is vital to be clear about what Marx saw in it and why also that, for him, it was a premature and finally unwise act of heroism.

III. THE COMMUNE AND DEMOCRACY

For us "democracy" refers to statist electoral politics and "anarchism" refers either to a silly utopianism or to terrorist politics. If in the nineteenth century, these terms had not yet been thoroughly appropriated by the enemies of rule by the *demos*, it was already the case, as Marx noted, that "it was generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even

defunct forms of social life, to which they bear a certain likeness".[11] In what sense, then, was the Commune "a completely new historical creation"?

On the one hand, it was anarchist in the sense that it broke state power. As he wrote: "The unity of the nation was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, to be organized by the communal Constitution and to become a reality by the destruction of the State power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity independent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence."[12] But it was not anarchist in the sense of Stirner, Proudhon or Bakunin. Marx took these writers seriously - with due cause - but because, on his view, they lacked an adequate understanding of political economy, they were mistaken both as regards their vision of a good society and as regards the means of attaining it. Putting the matter as briefly as possible, for Marx, anarchists were inverted statists. Since on their view the state was the problem, once rid of it, all would be well. Because for them there was little point in discriminating between forms of the state, transformative activity, whether the anti-revolutionary activity of Proudhon or the conspiratorial activity of Bakunin, had to wash its hands of the state. As Proudhon said, "to indulge in politics is to wash one's hand in dung".[13]

Marx saw the matter very differently. His view of the Commune gives us a start in seeing how. In the first place, the Commune was

> a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class ... [14]

We must be clear what this means. The Commune had fashioned the first "government" - the word must be used gingerly - which aimed at realizing full control over the circumstances of life by ordinary citizens. It was in this sense "expansive" in contrast to those forms which took for granted the conditions of ordinary life. Even the best case, *e.g.*, the democracy of ancient Athens, took these for granted. Previous democracies, like non-democracies, were "repressive" in that they aimed but to replace the rule of one class for another - without altering the alienating conditions which called for class rule in the first place. For example, in the ancient *polis*, "politics" regarded the struggle between rich and poor over decisions of law and war, but the poor were not social revolutionaries in the sense that they either did or could aim at reconstituting society. This idea, which was owed to the French Revolution, regarded the perception, now familiar largely through the thought of Hegel and of Marx, that human history was radically unlike

natural history in being the product of human activity. For Marx this meant that

> Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all natural premises as the creatures of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjects them to the power of united individuals.[15]

Political democracy was "a great step forward" because it acknowledged "the sovereign people", but it was but "the final form" of emancipation "within the prevailing order of things".

Indeed, it was just for these reasons that the Commune could not have succeeded: "Apart from the fact that this was merely the rising of a city under exceptional circumstances, the majority of the Commune was in no way socialist nor could it be."[16] The "exceptional circumstances" which produced the Commune left the full machinery of the repressive French State in place, and insofar, the Communards faced formidable odds. But in addition, because the Communards were not organized, politically active workers, their political capacities were undeveloped.

The problem was not that the Communards lacked revolutionary consciousness, for they surely knew how to die on the barricades, nor was the problem economistic, regarding their incapacity at the existing stage of economic development to conquer scarcity, but that an alienated citizenry was in no position to reabsorb their alienated social powers. They were still isolated, "private" persons who, as not yet thoroughly interdependent, could not organize themselves so as to realize fully the powers which they had. As Edwards says: "the Communards belonged more to the past tradition of Paris revolutionaries than presaging the industrial struggles of the future".[17] As an alliance of artisans, of workers in craft industries, of petty bourgeois shopkeepers and traders, it was impossible for them to overcome "the contradiction between public and private life, between general and particular interests". It was thus that "with a modicum of common sense ... [the Commune] could have reached a compromise with Versailles useful to the whole mass of the people - the only thing that could have been reached at the time".[18]

The anarchists saw and celebrated the fact that the Commune was not made by "the proletariat" and was instead an alliance of "the people", and they saw and celebrated the spontaneity and disorganization which was a critical mark of the Commune. But, for Marx, their failure to see that unless the Communards were to have a long period for self-education in self-rule - an impossibility in the cir-

cumstances of Civil War - the Commune had to fail.

A second point of comparison between Marx' understanding of the Commune and anarchist thought regards the question of "government". For us, either there is a government or there is "anarchy" - no authority, no coercive organization. The idea was surely reinforced by a great deal of anarchist polemics - especially in the nineteenth century, but the confusion is deeper, depending on the eighteenth-century identification of rule with government.

In the ancient *polis*, there was, strictly speaking, no government; there was rule by one, few or many. Political power was unmediated. In the modern state, however, there are always governments, the executive, parliament, bureaucracies and the police, and they always claim to "represent" the "governed". It is easy then to suppose that the middle ground between self-rule and rule by others is modern political democracy, "representative government". But for Marx (and Dewey, as we shall see), this was not the only alternative. The institutional novelty of the Commune was in just this.

There would be "functionaries" of the people, "agents" in the strictest of senses, and these would be under strict "instructions" from those whom they represent. These functionaries would not be as in bourgeois democracy merely "authorized" to rule those who elect them, but would be as ambassadors or military commanders, "responsible" and "revocable" at the pleasure of those who elected them. "Sovereignty", as in Rousseau, would not be alienated. Accordingly, it would not be illusory. As Marx wrote:

> Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business. And it is well-known that companies, like individuals, in matters of real business generally know how to put the right man in the right place, and, if they once make a mistake, to redress it promptly. On the other hand, nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of the Commune than to supersede universal suffrage by hierarchic investiture.[19]

It is hard to know how to classify this arrangement. Is it a "government" with power but no authority or with authority but no power? It would "manage" but it would be, like the police and the courts - which are not to be abolished - "elective, responsible, and revocable". We need to emphasize here that the rejection of bourgeois democracy did not involve the rejection of its patently most critical democratic features: free elections, free communication, *etc.* Marx

never questioned their indispensability. His criticism, like Dewey's, was that democracy required something more, not something less. For Marx, it meant a form of real participation consistent with "government".

We should note also that Marx' analogy is nearly perfect. A "company" could be "operated" by "workmen and managers", and no one supposes that the owner of the company has lost his "sovereignty". It was but elitist propaganda to believe that the same principles could not apply to a "commune". The only real question was whether a commune, like a company, could agree on the goals of the association. This problem, of course, relates to the first point regarding the question of whether the citzenry is or is not alienated.

Finally, as already suggested, we must not assume that a full-fledged democracy would be totalitarian, that "the people" ruling themselves would trample "personal freedom". As Aristotle and Madison both saw, this assumption was warranted where "personal freedom" meant "the rights of property", freedom of the exploiters to exploit the exploited. Insofar as the Commune was "expansive" and not "repressive", it would be different from previous democracies. It is true, of course, that Marx did mock liberal constitutional theory and did not himself pay heed to the institutional problems of true democracy, but it is clear that he profoundly valued "personal freedom", saw, rightly, that "only in community do the means exist for every individual to cultivate his talents in all directions", and assumed, optimistically, that individuals in a community would act so that, in contrast to previous forms, all would realize "personal freedom". The absence of concern to institutional detail here stems from his commitment to a democratic politics, to his repeated contention that no one could write scripts for others - still less for future others who will need to solve just those problems which they have.[20]

It is also clear that if "the unity of the nation" was not to be broken some sort of federation was involved, and while this was not to be a "federation of small States, as dreamt of by Montesquieu and the Girondins", it is not clear what Marx has in mind. There are, from Marx' point of view, two possible objections to "small States". First, if they are states, then they still embody an alienated politics. Second, if they are small, "the unity of the nation is broken". This second problem is critical, but it is hard to say whether, as he suggests, "the nation" is the smallest unit for social production in the modern world, or whether, perhaps as part of this, if we are to think of moving progressively towards the future and be realistic, we need, in a world of aggrandizing nation-states, to think in terms of nations?

The problem is resolvable, however, if we return Marx' discussion to its context. Marx' conclusion, that had the Commune shown "a

modicum of common-sense", it would have tried to reach "a compromise with Versailles", powerfully reinforces a host of evidence that Marx' politics were gradualist. This means, in this context, that the best that one could have hoped for, in these circumstances, was the best possible compromise consistent with the continuing existence of the French State. To suppose that the Communards could have mapped out and realized the future is the worst kind of utopian thinking.

IV. MARX' GRADUALIST POLITICS

It may be doubted that Marx' politics were gradualist. But a gradualist politics is not necessarily "reformist" nor is it necessarily anti-revolutionary. It is a politics which seeks to realize what is at the time realizable. Marx surely wanted society to be revolutionized and he surely also believed that, at the right moment, a revolution would occur; but there is strong evidence that Marx was never naive about "the right moment" and that, in contrast to anarchist-inspired politics, he was always perfectly prepared to work within the state - if it was a liberal democratic state.[21]

Already against Stirner, he had argued that "it is only in the mind of the ideologist that [the 'will' to abolish competition and with it the state and law] arises before conditions have developed far enough to make its production possible".[22] And to emphasize, the conditions referred to are political, regarding the political capacities of the people whose activities had sustained "competition" and "law and the state". But perhaps the clearest statement of his position is his speech, given upon resigning from the Central Council of the Communist League:

> The minority have substituted the dogmatic spirit for the critical, the idealist interpretation of events for the materialist. Simple will-power, instead of the true relations of things, has become the motive force of the revolution. While we say to the working people, 'You will have to go through fifteen, twenty-five years of civil wars, and wars between nations not only to change existing conditions but to change yourselves and make yourselves worthy of political power,' you on the other hand, say 'We ought to get power at once, or else give up the fight.' ... Just as the democrats make a fetish of the word 'people' you make one of the word 'proletariat.' Like them, you substitute revolutionary phrases for revolutionary action.[23]

We can be reminded that, writing in 1852, he held that "the carrying of universal suffrage in England would ... be a far more

socialist measure than anything that has been honoured with that name on the continent". He continued, optimistically, that "its inevitable result ... [would be] the political supremacy of the working class".[24] And his mind had not changed, after the Commune, when in 1871, he wrote that:

> The ultimate object of the political movement of the working class is ... the conquest of political power for this class; and this naturally requires that the organization of the working class, an organization which arises from its economic struggles, should previously reach a certain level of development. On the other hand, however, every movement in which the working class as a *class* confronts the ruling classes and tries to constrain them by pressure from without is a political movement. For instance, the attempt by strikes, *etc.*, in a particular factory or even in a particular trade to compel individual capitalists to reduce the working day, is a purely economic movement. On the other hand, the movement to force through an eight-hour, *etc.*, law is a political movement. And in this way, out of the separate economic movements of the workers grows up everywhere a political movement, that is to say, a class movement, with the object of enforcing its interests in a general form, in a form possessing general, socially coercive force. While these movements presuppose a certain degree of previous organization, they are in turn equally a means of developing this organization.[25]

V. THE REDEFINITION OF MARXIAN POLITICS

Events did not proceed, however, as Marx had thought they would. While, on the one hand, industrialization in England and then in Germany did promote an increasingly politicized labor movement, radicals were by no means able to agree on either strategy or tactics. During his lifetime, Marx had had some success in negotiating the differences and in maintaining the extraordinarily diverse elements of the International on a course of gradualist change. But the events which led to the effective demise of the First International (in 1872, formally in 1876 in Philadelphia) were critical in the subsequent Internationalist movement, in Marxist politics and in our retrospective understanding of Marx' politics.

Oversimplifying a very complicated story, instead of being, as Thomas puts it, "a form of doctrine having some vague and, as far as Marx was concerned, irksome appeal", anarchism became a movement "having a considerable, and widespread, appeal across national boun-

daries".[26] Because Marx wanted not merely that there should be a revolution, but that it be the right sort of revolution, he fought the anarchists tooth and nail. He did not fight them, if the foregoing is correct, because he believed in the state, or in centralized authority, or worse, in a revolution made by revolutionaries in the name of the people. For Marx, the First International and the Paris Commune did in fact prefigure the future, yet the repression which the Paris Commune provoked, itself a critical factor in the demise of the International, and Marx' role in this collapse, had serious consequences. Instead of being a pluralist, ideologically heterogeneous vehicle for the transformation of the international order, subsequent Internationals were monolithic and ideologically doctrinaire. Indeed, Marx' machinations versus Bakunin became the alibi for this and at the same time confirmed as "prophetic" the anarchist suspicion that Marx and Marxism were authoritarian, offering but a new version of absolutist politics. Finally, failing to grasp what the Commune was and why it failed, instead of being for radicals a premature glimmer into a historically novel form of society, for some, because it lacked "centralization and authority", the Commune became an apocalyptic and hopelessly degenerative fit of revolutionary madness. For others, it was the very model of revolution, "of the spontaneity of the masses". For many anarchists, the Commune proved that revolution did not require a "vanguard working class", still less, "organization"; or, quite oppositely, as in Bakunin and the Blanquists, it showed the need for a conspiratorial revolutionary party to provide the match which would light the fire of revolution.

But events continued to undermine Marx' hopes. The destruction of Internationalism, of social democracy in Germany[27] and the collapse of Tsarist Russia, all sparked by the World War, completed that redefinition of Marxist politics which had begun with the violent end of the Commune. After the Bolshevik Revolution, Marxist struggles to transform society will rapidly collapse into two poles, between a Blanquist-style demand for a revolutionary conspiratorial vanguard of the working class aimed at "smashing the state" and reformist social democracy, aimed not at a gradualist transformation of the political conditions for revolution, but at winning economic concessions from the capitalists.[28]

By the turn of the century, it had already become clear to Marxists that while "economic development" was creating the conditions for "socialist production", it was not creating a revolutionary consciousness among the workers. Writing in his enormously influential - and often misunderstood - 'What is to be Done?' (1902), Lenin noted that "'everyone agrees' that it is necessary to develop the political consciousness of the working class". "The question was", he continued, "how is that to be done and what is required to do it?" For Lenin,

"economism" - the effort to win economic concessions - and terrorism "have one common root, *subservience to spontaniety*". For Lenin, both views presumed historical inevitability and were thus apolitical. While as with Marx and the social democrats, "the working class" remained the center of a mass-based social revolution, Lenin insisted that "we must 'go among all classes of the population' as theoreticians, as propagandists, as agitators and as organizers"; and while he protested against Blanquism and against "confining the political struggle to conspiracy", he also insisted that this did not deny "the need for a strong revolutionary organization" - if the workers were to be politicized.[29] But it was easy to read this tract in the light of the Bolshevik Revolution and to hold that it had already set out the principles of socialist revolution, not as a movement of workers, nor of workers allied with other classes, but of an authoritarian organization of dedicated professional revolutionaries, a minority acting for "the workers".[30]

It is exactly here, then, where we can begin our analysis of Dewey's version of a democratic politics.

VI. DEWEY'S VISION OF DEMOCRACY AND HIS ANALYSIS OF THE DEMOCRATIC STATE

Dewey was born in 1859, the year that Marx published the *Critique of Political Economy*, but Dewey did not turn explicitly to political philosophy until his 1915 *German Philosophy and Politics*. Moreover, while it is well-known that Dewey was a critic of Marxism, especially in his writings beginning in the 1930's, Dewey could not at that time have read Marx' critique of Hegel's philosophy of state and the tracts on alienation, nor what we call the *Grundrisse*, nor even the critically important *The German Ideology*. For Dewey, Marxism was philosophically what may be called "Second International Marxism", a variant which was powerfully influenced by the monist philosophy of history of Georgi Plekhanov. Politically, Marxism was, by that time, defined largely by Lenin - by then understood as the promoter of the "vanguard Party". Dewey's philosophical roots, of course, like Marx', trace to Hegel - a fact of some importance; but his political sensitivities were shaped not by the revolutions of 1848 or the Paris Commune, but by New England localism and an understanding of this which in critical ways was Jeffersonian.

In *German Philosophy and Politics*, Dewey traced the philosophic basis of patriotic statism in Germany and concluded that "the present situation presents the spectacle of the breakdown of the whole philosophy of Nationalism, political, racial and cultural". Dewey

rejected the sufficiency of "arbitration, treaties, international judicial councils, schemes of international disarmament, peace funds and peace movements". He called for "more radical thinking" of the problem.[31] The problem of statist politics was also present in *Democracy and Education*, published the next year. He asked: "Is it possible for an educational system to be conducted by a national state and yet the full social ends of the educative process not be restricted, constrained, and corrupted?"[32] Dewey thought that the answer could be yes, if, to be sure, we were talking about education "in and for a democratic society". In *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920), he argued that despite wide differences, political philosophies were "agreed upon the final consummating position of the state" and he concluded that assumptions regarding the "unique and supreme position of the State in the social hierarchy" had solidified into dogma.[33] By 1927, these ideas found expression in two brilliant tracts, 'Nationalism and its Fruits' and *The Public and its Problems*. In the former he wrote:

> Patriotism, National Honor, National Interests and National Sovereignty are the four foundation stones upon which the structure of the National State is erected. It is no wonder that the windows of such a building are closed to the light of heaven; that its inmates are fear, jealousy, suspicion, and that War issues regularly from its portals.[34]

In *Democracy and Education*, democracy had already been construed by Dewey as both "a mode of associated living", and as "a form of government". In that book, the two ideas went hand in hand. Education in a political democracy had as its aim "sustaining and extending" democracy as a mode of associated living, of "conjoint communicated experience". As a way of life, democracy was "the extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own." "The widening of the area of shared concerns" breaks down "barriers of class, race and national territory." Such widening was not, he had written, "the product of deliberation and conscious effort". On the contrary, it was the result of "the development of modes of manufacture and commerce, travel, migration and intercommunication which flowed from the command of science over natural energy".[35] Just as Marx had supposed that capitalist modes of intercourse would destroy national boundaries, make for international proletarian solidarity, and politicize workers, Dewey hoped that these forces would propel democracy as a way of life.

But the critical eleven years which separated *Democracy and Edu-*

cation and *The Public and Its Problems* forced Dewey to different conclusions. Not only had he developed a critique of democracy as "a form of government", but it was now clear to him that democracy as a way of life was not being fostered by the new interdependencies and the new capacities of technological society. On the contrary, democracy as a mode of associated living was being profoundly undermined by these same forces.

In terms familiar to the anarchism of Gustave Landauer and Martin Buber, Dewey argued that democracy was not "an alternative to other principles of associated life. It is the idea of community itself." Community requires that "the consequences of combined action [be] perceived and become an object of desire and effort". "Immediate contiguity, face to face relationships have consequences which generate a community of interests, a sharing of values ... ". Within a community, "the state is an impertinence".[36]

Turning his attention to democracy as a form of government, Dewey argued that the democratic state had emerged at a specific period in the development of the modern state for reasons largely unrelated to the goal of realizing democracy, understood as a form of association in which people collectively govern themselves. At best, political democracy "represents an effort ... to counteract forces that so largely determined the possession of rule by accidental and irrelevant factors, and ... an effort to counteract the tendency to employ political power to serve private instead of public ends". But political democracy had failed even to realize these limited goals. "In a word", he concluded, "the new forms of combined action due to the modern economic regime controls present policies, much as dynastic interests controlled those of two centuries ago. They affect thinking and desire more than did the interests which formerly moved the state."[37] The analysis compares easily to Marx', but especially insofar as it suggests that the constraints on policies, as on "thinking and desire", are structurally rooted.

Dewey's analysis showed that the problem of constituting democracy as a way of life had no easy solutions, since critically, it did not involve perfecting the institutions of political democracy. In America, most people, at least, could vote; there was a free press and parties which competed for the vote. The problem was very much deeper and regarded the disintegration of the conditions for democracy as a way of life: the incapacity of interdependent people even to perceive the consequences of "combined action", still less to be able to perceive shared goods and to act on them:

> ... [T]he machine age has so enormously expanded, multiplied, intensified and complicated the scope of indirect consequences, has formed such immense and consolidated unions in action, on an

> impersonal rather than a community basis, that the resultant public cannot identify and distinguish itself.[38]

Dewey's indictment of America's alienated politics is persistent in his writings of the period.

In *Individualism Old and New* (1929), he spoke of "the lost individual", lost because while "persons are now caught up in a vast complex of associations, there is no harmonious and coherent reflection of the import of these connections into the imaginative and emotional outlook of life". "Rapacious nationalism" is seen to result from the fact that, detached from "their old local ties and allegiances", individuals lack "a new center and order of life". Where "armies and navies exist to protect commerce, to make secure the control of raw materials, and to command markets", and peace cannot establish "a common life", "the emotions are mobilized in the service of a war that will supply its temporary simulation".[39] In *Freedom and Culture* (1939), he spoke of a kind of "molluscan organization, soft individuals within and a hard constrictive shell without". Turning on the schools and mass media, Dewey argued:

> Schooling in literacy is no substitute for the dispositions which were formerly provided by direct experience of an educational quality. The void created by lack of relevant personal experiences combines with the confusion produced by impact of multitudes of unrelated incidents to create attitudes which are responsive to organized propaganda, hammering in day after day the same few and relatively simple beliefs asseverated to be the 'truths' essential to national welfare.[40]

What, then, was to be done?

VII. DEWEY'S REJECTION OF CLASS POLITICS

Dewey visited the Soviet Union in 1928, the year after he published *The Public and Its Problems*. In no sense was Dewey an ideological anti-Marxist. He had assessed the Bolshevik revolution as "an experiment to discover whether the familiar democratic ideals - familiar in words at least - ... will not be most completely realized in a social regime based on voluntary co-operation, on conjoint workers' control and management of industry".[41] Dewey saw, it is clear, that socialism was inconceivable without democracy and that, as the foregoing suggests, democracy in its complete sense demanded socialism. Nevertheless, his analysis of the democratic state made it plain to him,

though not to the Marxists, that in the United States, at least, proletarian revolution was not on the historical agenda. For him, the critical issue was the very idea of class.

A great deal of what Dewey wrote during this period sounded like a Marxian class analysis. In addition to what has already been noted, consider *Individualism Old and New*. In that critical text, Dewey argued that the issue which Marx had raised, "the relation of the economic structure to political operations - is one that actively persists". "Indeed", he continues, "it forms the only basis of present political questions." In the pages which follow, Dewey gives an account of the crisis which could have come from *Capital*, Vol. III. He writes:

> There are now, it is estimated, eight billions of surplus savings a year, and the amount is increasing. Where is this capital to find its outlet? Diversion into the stock market gives temporary relief, but the resulting inflation is a 'cure' which creates a new disease. If it goes into the expansion of industrial plants, how long will it be before they, too, 'overproduce'?

There is even a clear reference to the upshot of the Marxian labor theory of value:

> That the total earnings of eight million wage workers should be only four times the amount of what the income-tax returns frankly call the 'unearned' income of ... eleven thousand millionaires goes almost without notice.[42]

Perhaps even more Marxist sounding is his claim that "large and basic economic currents cannot be ignored for any length of time, and they are working in one direction". Indeed, "economic determinism is now a fact, not a theory". His account concludes with a text that could have been written by Engels:

> ... There is a difference and a choice between a blind, chaotic and unplanned determinism, issuing from business conducted for pecuniary profit--the anarchy of capitalist production--and the determination of socially planned and ordered development. It is the difference and the choice between a socialism that is public and one that is capitalistic.[43]

Finally, Dewey also sees the relation between this theoretically informed analysis and the problem of the "lost individual". "We live", he writes, "politically from hand to mouth."

> The various expressions of public control ... have taken place sporadically and in response to the pressure of distressed groups so large that their voting power demanded attention. They have been improvised to meet special occasions. They have not been adopted as parts of any general social policy.

It is clear enough why this is the case. Under present arrangements, "financial and industrial power, corporately organized, can deflect economic consequences away from the advantage of the many to serve the privilege of the few". The political parties themselves, the ostensible vehicles of mobilization for change, "have been eager accomplices in maintaining confusion and unreality".[44]

This analysis, as pertinent today as when it was offered, is not untypical of Dewey. It suggests that Dewey's understanding of the political possibilities of democratic politics in capitalist America was anything but naive, and that, in important ways, it was close to Marxism. But for all this, there is evidence that he sometimes lost sight of the critical issue. An instance is the book which some have taken to be one of Dewey's more radical political tracts, *Liberalism and Social Action*, written in 1935.

As is well-known, Dewey there insisted that

> Liberalism must become radical, meaning by 'radical' perception of the necessity of thorough-going changes in the set-up of institutions and corresponding activity to bring changes to pass.[45]

Dewey emphatically rejected reform that dealt with but "this abuse and now that without having a social goal based on an inclusive plan", but he was less clear what that goal and plan was. One thing was clear: Dewey rejected Marxism, but especially "the idea of a struggle between classes, culminating in open and violent warfare as being the method for production of radical social change".[46]

Dewey had a clear and adequate instrumentalist view of violence. In another place he had written that "what is justly objected to as violence or undue coercion is a reliance upon wasteful or destructful means of accomplishing results".[47] In *Liberalism and Social Action*, similarly, it was not violence as such that was the issue. He recognized, with the Marxists, that "force, rather than intelligence is built into the procedures of the existing social system", and that even free expression will be tolerated "as long as it does not seem to menace in any way the status quo of society".[48] When it does, he wrote, the state will be quick to use official violence in the name of protecting "the general welfare". Dewey had learned from his experience with the Palmer raids and the tragedy of Sacco and Vanzetti.

What then was his objection to the class war notion of the Marxists? Dewey might have argued, though he did not, that the Marxist analysis was substantially correct, but that for good historical reasons, the idea of struggle between classes, culminating in open warfare, had to be rejected. The argument for this conclusion would be complicated, but it would be fully consistent with Dewey's own analysis of the democratic state.

In agreement with the anarchists of his day, for Dewey, "the workers" were not to be agents of social change. It was not that there was no oppression and inequality in America, that workers were not exploited, nor that they were happy with their lot. One did not hear their "angry voices", Dewey wrote, but that was not because they were drowned out by "shouts of eagerness for adventurous opportunity". Rather, "the murmurs of discontent are drowned" by "the murmurs of lost opportunities, along with the din of machinery, motor cars and speakeasies".[49] The metaphor, suggestive of the much later writings of Marcuse or Foucault, was employed in the context of Dewey's brilliant analysis of America individualism. It was not roast beef, but "repressive needs", "normalization" and "atomization" which had disintegrated class consciousness.

As I argued, Marx knew that the struggle would be long and hard, but he could not have anticipated the fantastic flexibility of capitalism in the liberal democracies, and especially in America, the fragmenting effects of race and ethnicity. In America, then, "workers" had become a politically useless category. But if so, then, "class struggle" was, at its worse, a slogan for assuring the faithful or, at its best, an abstraction at a different level of analysis.

The issue is complicated, but I must be brief. In Marxism, classes are not defined by a set of empirically given characteristics, *e.g.*, income, social status, or occupation. Rather, "class" is a theoretical concept, grounded in the central concept of mode of production. Marx' *Capital* provides a theoretical and abstract account of the capitalist mode of production. Abstractly considered, there are but two classes, the owners of the means of production and the producers of surplus value, the proletariat. This analysis, the core of any Marxism, provides an understanding of capitalism as a mode of production. It shows what problems need to be solved if it is to be reproduced - including thus an explanation of why capitalist relations need to be mystified, the famous "fetishism of commodities". It shows that capitalism is "irrational", that it is subject to periodic crises, and it gives an argument for socialism by showing that as long as the means of production are not jointly controlled, there is no way to end domination and alienation - including the alienated politics of the modern state.

But of course the real world is not just a mode of production. It is

a society with a mode of production. It has state structures, churches, gender and racial conflicts, schools and mass media. It has housewives, "professionals", civil servants, and all sorts of "workers" who are not proletarians - defined as producers of surplus value. But this means that Marx' projection into the future of the effects of the capitalist mode of production could well be wrong - as, indeed, it was.

In the nineteenth century, it was still possible to keep things simple by identifying the growing class of industrial workers with a growing and increasingly organized proletariat, to suppose, as the *Manifesto* had it, that "the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants - all these sink gradually into the proletariat". "The workers", now "the immense majority", now organized, now pauperized, would become a revolutionary class. But close as that had come to being prophetic, just before World War I, that time had now passed. More generally, then, since Marxist revolutionary class politics was predicated on the assumption of global capitalist transformation, of increasing polarization and immiseration, and on the consequent development of the political capacities of organized workers, and since these had not obtained as Marx had hoped, Marxists might well have abandoned the idea of proletarian revolution. The problem, then, would not be to find or make a revolutionary class, but as Hindess writes, "to mobilize effective support around socialist objectives out of the forces, struggles and ideologies operative in particular societies".[50]

The Marxists of the inter-war period did not, of course, see this; nor, given that their Marxism was the monocausal Marxism of the Second International, was it surprising that Dewey would reject Marxist analysis.

He observed, rightly, that "according to the Marxians ... the economic foundations of society consist of two things, the forces of production on one side and, on the other side, the social relations of production". Further, for Marxians, scientific technology is part of the forces of production. It is dynamic while the social relations are static; they "lag behind". Dewey here was ready to admit that "what was happening socially is the result of the combination of these two factors", and thus it would seem that here, as above, Dewey had fully appropriated the extremely influential *Preface* account of what came to be called "historical materialism".[51] But Dewey then insisted that it was but "a truism" to call this combination "capitalism" and to say that "capitalism is the 'cause' of all the important changes that have occurred". On his view,

> Colossal increase in productivity, the bringing together of men in cities and large factories, the elimination of distance, the accumu-

> lation of capital, fixed and liquid - these things would have come about, at a certain stage, no matter what the established institutional system. They are the consequences of the new means of technological production.[52]

The text is a startlingly clear expression of technological determinism, but if indeed, for "orthodox" Marxists, "technology" produces changes in the relations of production and thus explains the emergence of capitalism, Dewey saw what they did not, that once one holds that technology directly defines the labor process and, through this, the wider social relations, "historical materialism" entails that there need be little real difference between "capitalism" and "socialism"![53]

Dewey's concrete approach should have put him on guard. While he often succumbs to the high abstraction, "industrial society", he seems also to have seen that the logic and consequences of the accumulation of capital was a fundamental cause of the way changes occurred in the West, of the particular application of technologies and the particular distribution of wealth and resources, that had capitalism been other than what it is - and here we are indebted to Marx - technological production could surely have been different. Putting the matter as briefly as possible, insofar as the relations of private property define the accumulation of capital, the state is preferably liberal. This means not just that private and public are bifurcated but that government will be predictably limited in addressing problems thrown up by the process of capital accumulation. At the very least, it must be constrained to activities consistent with the maintenance of the system of private accumulation.

Dewey's claim that "the release of productivity is the product of cooperatively organized intelligence" is correct. As Marxists point out, production is socialized in capitalism. Moreover, if one wants the productivity associated with industrial societies, there is no alternative to that. But Dewey's idea that "coercion and oppression on a large scale exist" because "of the perpetuation of old institutions and patterns not touched by scientific method" is patently fallacious. Indeed, in the text already quoted from *Individualism Old and New*, he had it right: "There is a difference and a choice between a blind, chaotic and unplanned determinism, issuing from business conducted for pecuniary profit, and the determination of a socially planned and ordered development", between "a socialism that is public and one that is capitalistic". This difference, of course, is exactly the extension of political democracy to the economy, the elimination of the contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation, and finally, as Marx insisted and Dewey surely seemed also to see, the reappropriation of social powers by united individuals.

Once Dewey lost touch with the root of the problem, he could no longer offer plausible solutions. He offered:

> The question is whether force or intelligence is to be the method upon which we consistently rely and to whose promotion we devote our energies. Insistence that the use of force is inevitable limits the use of available intelligence ... There is an undoubted objective clash of interests between finance-capitalism that controls the means of production and whose profit is served by maintaining relative scarcity, and idle workers and hungry consumers. But what generates violent strife is failure to bring the conflict into the light of intelligence, where the conflicting interests can be adjudicated on behalf of the interests of the great majority.[54]

The argument is a bad argument for at least three reasons. First, Dewey's absolutist either/or, either force or intelligence, is unwarranted. No serious revolutionary, not Marx, not Lenin, not even Bakunin, so tied his hands in the way that Dewey suggests, even if, for them, violence was inevitable. One would have supposed that Dewey's fine understanding of the use of violence by the state in defense of the status quo would have led him to the conclusion that as regards radical social change, some violence would, at some point, be necessary.

Second, whatever the difficulties of a Marxian analysis, Marxists were not so foolish as to suppose that the lions, the finance capitalists, would sit down with the lambs and "adjudicate" away their privileged power. The "objective clash of interests" which Dewey rightly acknowledged was neither temporary nor negotiable. Rooted in the capitalist system as such, it left the parties locked "in a death clutch".[55]

Third, Dewey here presupposes that publics exist, for it is only then, as he here implies, that "cooperative intelligence" can be a mode of social reconstruction. Immediately after he condemns Marxists for "a rigid logic", he says: "The 'experimentalist' is one who would see to it that the method depended upon by all in some degree *in a democratic community* can be followed through to completion".[56]

It will not be easy to explain Dewey's continuing optimism that creative intelligence can be effective even where it so patently lacks institutions. It is easier to explain his decisive turn against Marxism. By 1928 at least, Dewey had given up on the Socialist Party.[57] By this time, the Soviets had already severely abused, perhaps irreparably, the idea of "socialism". They would, in the years coming, disillusion still more. As noted, Dewey's notion of Marxism was essentially the Marxism of the Second International, a Marxism flawed in more ways than one. In his 1939 *Freedom and Culture*, Dewey attacked Marxism as unscientific on grounds that it had "a monistic block-universe theory

of social causation". The monistic theory of history was a disaster. Social causation was plural and reciprocal. As I have suggested in this essay, the actual course of history is the cluttered product of contingencies that no theory could assimilate.[58] On the other hand, Dewey - like the Marxists - had never himself been clear on the causal questions regarding capitalism, industrial society and the modern state. If anything, he shared with them a tendency toward technological and economic determinism. Similarly, he was fully correct to charge that no one was less scientific than the "scientific" Soviet Marxists: "Scientific method in operating with working hypotheses instead of with fixed and final Truth is not forced to have an Inner Council to declare just what is the Truth ... ".[59] Finally, Marxists had all too often argued that capitalism was the only evil and that therefore, once rid of it, all would be lovely. One would have thought that the Thirties proved otherwise.

Still, by 1939, Dewey had definitely shifted his emphasis - if not worse. After reminding his readers that he had "from time to time pointed out the harmful consequences the present regime of industry and finance had upon the reality of democratic ends and methods" and that he had "nothing to retract", he went on to say that the Marxists were wrong in holding that "government in the so-called democratic states is only the organ of a capitalist class". Now if this meant - as by then Marxists had supposed - that the state could not be used by revolutionary socialists, then Dewey was surely correct. But as I have argued, Marx would have agreed with Dewey here. Yet Dewey seems to mean more than this:

> the effect of constant criticism of governmental action; of more than one political party in formulating rival policies; of frequent elections; of the discussion and public education that attend majority rule, and above all the fact that political action is but one factor in the interplay of a number of cultural factors, have a value that critics of partial democracy have not realized.[60]

Though admittedly "partial", he was now prepared to defend what he took to be a characteristic American "looseness of cohesion and indefiniteness in direction of action".

> We take for granted the action of a number of diverse factors in producing any social result. There are temporary waves of insistence upon this and that particular measure and aim. But there is enough democracy so that in time any one tendency gets averaged up in interplay with other tendencies. An average presents qualities that are open to easy criticism. But as compared with the fanaticism generated by monistic ideas when they are put into operation, the

> averaging of tendencies, a movement toward the mean, is an achievement of splendor.[61]

But from the fact that what happens in history is the product of complex multiple factors working in unpredictable ways, it did not follow that American "pluralist" politics generated some splendid "movement toward the mean", that conflicting "interests" somehow get "averaged up", that "the equilibrium in social affairs" was desirable. Indeed, how "pluralist" could a politics be when, as he had argued in 1927, the public was lost? Finally, it was true that "political action is but one factor", but does not this mean, as in 1929 he also had seen, that in a capitalist society, this left a free hand for "financial and industrial power, corporately organized"?

Dewey could accept "the criticism that much of our political democracy is more formal than substantial, provided", he now insisted, "it is placed in contrast with totalitarian political control".[62] To be sure, one does not need a very good society to compare well with Nazism and Stalinism. One might argue here that the despair of politics, so characteristic of our day, had by then infected Dewey and that, like Sidney Hook and later pragmatists, he was now prepared to celebrate bourgeois democracy. But this would be most unfair to Dewey.

Not only was he unflinching in his rejection of the "new kind of Stoicism" which had gripped post-war Europe, but he was unflinching in his recognition of the profoundly troubled situation and in his commitment to the idea that things could be made better - a great deal better. As Lothstein writes:

> The central point for Dewey was that while suffering and setback suffused the total human endeavor, it was neither daemonic or unremitting. Rather suffering and celebration ... were experimental correlatives, happiness supervening upon their conjoint and dialectical origination. Although nested in a radically contingent and indeterminate world, our situation, Dewey argued, was not that of Sisyphus or Job, our fate sealed by divine fiat or historical obsolescence. He saw us instead as freewheeling sculptors of meaning in a world bereft of ultimate guarantees, but open to experimental improvement.[63]

Nor, despite his unflinching optimism, was it the case that Marx had ever expected miracles. There are, he once remarked, "no ready-made utopias to introduce *par decret du peuple*", and if so, then surely there were none to be instituted by "a vanguard party" wreaking death in the name of the people. If we are to be emancipated, we need "to work out our own emancipation" and "to pass through long struggles, through a

series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and [people]".

This returns us to the question of "foundations". Whatever his blind spots, Dewey's was a politics that needed no foundations. While Marx*ists* did find a foundation for politics in an eschatological philosophy of history, I have argued that this is much less clear as regards Marx. But, however that may be, what is now needed, it seems to me, is to renew the possibilities of democratic politics which acknowledges the insights of Marx but yet strips Marxism of the idea that history is on the side of emancipation. We need, that is, to combine the best in Marx and Dewey.

The public, lost and eclipsed, has not been found. For those of us living in a democratic state, finding it is the primary imperative. But how to do this? Dewey's answer might go as follows: Try, by taking advantage of any opportunity which presents itself, to bring into existence publics; try to give direct experience and educative quality by informing it; try to create from our atomized relations incipient communities which can be fostered and enlarged, and try to do this by identifying common goods which can call for active support and participation. Of course, this is not to say much, even if, as I think, it is true and important. Still, armed with a Marxist understanding of what is happening to us and why, it may be possible to take advantage of opportunities and to try, as Dewey offered, to build some incipient but progressively growing democratic publics.

NOTES

1. Cf. Norman Jacobson, *Pride and Solace, The Functions and Limits of Political Theory,* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978. Jacobson's book is perhaps the most systematic effort to examine the implications of a foundation-less politics, but his moral is equivocal. See my review, 'The Crisis of Contemporary Political Theory', *Interpretation*, 9 (September 1981). The texts quoted are from Arendt, as quoted by Jacobson, Chapter V, *passim.*

2. An anti-foundationalist politics need not reflect despair. Rorty suggests a version when he writes that "we should be more willing than we are to celebrate bourgeois capitalist society as the best polity actualized so far, while regretting that it is irrelevant to most of the problems of most of the population of the planet" ('Method, Social Science, Social Hope', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1982, 210). But of course, ideological certitude is an obvious feature of those American policies which, in the pursuit of triumph in what can only be called a Holy War, are as limitless in their means as any which Orwell, Camus or Arendt condemned. Indeed, "bourgeois capitalist society" is not "irrelevant" to most of the problems of most of the population of the planet exactly because it is a large part of the problem of these peoples - whether the societies are capitalist "miracles", *e.g.*, Korea, or "socialist" disasters, *e.g.*, Nicaragua.

3. An excellent contextual reading of Marx' politics is Alan Gilbert's *Marx' Politics: Communists and Citizens*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press. Gilbert, following a path marked by Michael Harrington (in his *Socialism*, Bantam, 1973), shows that Marx persistently altered his political strategies in the light of experience and that he was no economic determinist, inflexibly committed to pat formulas - unlike most of his later epigones. Paul Thomas' *Karl Marx and the Anarchists* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980) is an indispensable account of Marx' relations, ideologically and politically, to nineteenth-century anarchism. See also his 'Alienated Politics', in Terence Ball *et al* (eds.), *After Marx*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984. Martin Buber's *Paths in Utopia* (Boston, Beacon, 1949) remains valuable. Barry Hindess offers a crisp account of the critical debates between Lenin, Kautsky, and Bernstein. Unfortunately, he does not discuss Rosa Luxemburg, who was perhaps closest to Marx on the critical issues. See 'Marxism and Political Democracy', in Alan Hunt (ed.), *Marxism and Democracy*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1980. On Luxemburg, see Norman Geras,

The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg, London, NLB, 1976.

4. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, J. Sibree, trans., New York, Dover, 1956, p. 452.

5. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right,* T.M. Knox, trans., London, Oxford, 1952, par. 279.

6. 'On the Jewish Question', in Easton, L. and Guddat, K. (eds.), *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society,* New York, Doubleday, 1967, pp. 225f., p. 231.

7. Thomas, *Marx and the Anarchists*, p. 196.

8. *The German Ideology*, in Easton and Guddat, p. 263f.

9. *Communist Manifesto*, in David McClellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 237. This is not to say that there are not difficulties and ambiguities in Marx' writings on the critical issues. An excellent treatment is Frederic L. Bender, 'The Ambiguities of Marx' Concepts of "Proletarian Dictatorship" and "Transition to Communism"', *History of Political Thought*, II (November, 1981). See also, Harrington, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-60; Gilbert, *op. cit.* Chapter VIII.

10. Karl Marx, 'The Civil War in France', in *On the Paris Commune*, Moscow, Progress, 1971, p. 97. As Bender points out, Engels confirmed that for them, the Commune was a new type of polity. In an 1875 letter to Bebel, Engels wrote: "The whole talk about the state should be dropped [from our party's statements] especially since the Commune ... was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word [because it was a state in-the-process of dissolving]... We would therefore propose to replace *state* everywhere by *Gemeinwesen*, a good old German word which can very well convey the meaning of the French word 'commune'." (cited by Bender, op. cit., p. 549)

11. *Ibid.* p. 73.

12. *Loc. cit.*

13. Quoted from Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

14. 'Civil War in France', p. 75.

15. *The German Ideology*, in McLellan, p. 179.

16. Marx to Domela-Nieuwenhuis, 1881, in *On the Paris Commune*, p. 293.

17. Stewart Edwards, *The Paris Commune 1871*, New York, Quandrange Books, 1971), p. 360.

18. Marx to Domela-Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

19. 'Civil War in France', p. 73. For an extended development of these ideas in the American Confederation period, see my 'The Foreclosure of Democracy in America', *History of Political Thought*, (forthcoming).

20. Of course, insofar as he ignored the very real dangers of usurpation of power and violation of individual rights, Marx was, as

Bender notes, to this extent 'responsible' for later vanguard interpretations.

21. Harrington, Thomas and Gilbert each provides ample evidence on this critical point.

22. *The German Ideology*, cited by Thomas, *Marx and the Anarchists*, p. 343.

23. Quoted from Thomas, p. 331.

24. Quoted from Thomas, p. 345.

25. Quoted from Thomas, p. 347. See M. Levin, 'Marx and Working-Class Consciousness', *History of Political Thought*, I (Autumn, 1980).

26. Thomas, p. 249.

27. Cf. Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism*, Cambridge, Ma., Harvard, 1955.

28. See F. Claudin, 'Democracy and Dictatorship in Lenin and Kautsky', *New Left Review*, 107 (Nov./Dec. 1977).

29. *Essential Works of Lenin*, New York, Bantam, 1966, p. 112, p. 109.

30. This is hardly the place to survey the literature on Lenin and Leninism. My views are influenced by Roy Medvedev, *Leninism and Western Socialism*, London, NLB, 1981; Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*, New York, Knopf, 1974.

31. *German Philosophy and Politics*, New York, Henry Holt, 1915), p. 130.

32. *Democracy and Education*, New York, The Free Press, 1966), p. 97.

33. *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1957), p. 201.

34. In *Characters and Events*, Two Vols., edited by Joseph Ratner, New York, Henry Holt, 1929, II, p. 803.

35. *Democracy and Education*, p. 87. Compare, of course, Marx and Engels: "National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the developments of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world-market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto." (*Communist Manifesto*, in McClellan, p. 235).

36. *The Public and Its Problems*, Chicago, Swallow Press, 1954), p. 148, p. 151, p. 39, p. 41. I have examined Dewey's political philosophy from the vantage point of anarchism in 'John Dewey, Anarchism and the Political State', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. XVIII, 2 (1982), but the most extensive treatment of Dewey as a "vestibular" anarchist, "in the American grain", is Arthur Lothstein's excellent 'From Privacy to Praxis: The Case for John

Dewey as a Radical American Philosopher', PhD Dissertation, NYU, 1979. See also his 'Salving From the Dross: John Dewey's Anarcho-Communalism', *The Philosophical Forum*, 10 (Fall, 1978).

37. *The Public and Its Problems*, p. 83, p. 108.

38. *Ibid.* p. 126.

39. *Individualism Old and New*, New York, Capricorn, 1962, p. 85f., p. 61f.

40. *Freedom and Culture*, New York, Capricorn, 1963, p. 46. Compare Orwell, who longed to hear a human voice, instead of "fifty thousand gramophones ... playing the same tune".

41. *Characters and Events*, I, p. 424.

42. *Individualism Old and New*, p. 103, p. 109, p. 107.

43. *Ibid.* pp. 119f.

44. *Ibid.* pp. 114f.

45. *Liberalism and Social Action*, New York, Capricorn, 1963), p. 62.

46. *Ibid.* p. 78.

47. 'Force and Coercion' (1916), in *Characters and Events*, II, p. 789.

48. *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 63, p. 65.

49. *Individualism Old and New*, p. 78f.

50. Barry Hindess, *op. cit.* p. 42. Hindess argues that the series of critical debates between Kautsky, Lenin and Bernstein, from 1891 to World War I, are "variations on a single theme", viz., where to locate the boundaries "for non-economic, non-class determinants of political life and stop it from getting out of hand" (p. 37). Thus, while none of these writers was simply class-reductionist and while even Bernstein does not break completely with the conception that the economy is ultimately determining, they differ enormously on what and how much of what is political is not determined by the economy. But on Hindess' view, the debate between them is irresolvable because "there is no one general mechanism of connection between politics and the economy that is characteristic of capitalism as such--or for that matter, of particular historical phases of its development" (p. 41). In other words, as in Marx' own political practice, political questions must always be posed concretely, considering the particular details of the particular society under consideration. A "revisionist" politics becomes plausible, then, at the point where, in the liberal-democratic state, socialism is no longer primarily a class issue.

51. The phrase "historical materialism" is not used by Marx at all. Engels first employed the term "materialist conception of history" in a review of Marx' *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* which has the famous *Preface* which became the authority for Second International versions of "historical materialism". For a recent defense

of this view, see G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense*, New York, Oxford University Press and the critique by Andrew Levine and Eric Olin Wright, 'Rationality and the Class Struggle', *New Left Review*, 123 (Sept./Oct., 1980).

52. *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 81. In *Individualism Old and New*, Dewey had chastized Marx for reasoning "too much from psychological economic premises" and depending "too little upon technological causes" (p. 102).

53. See Phillip Corrigan, Harvie Ramsay and Derek Sayer, *Socialist Construction and Marxist Theory: Bolshevism and Its Critique*, New York, Monthly Review, 1978; Marc Rakovski, *Towards an East European Marxism*, London, Allison and Busby, 1978.

54. *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 79f.

55. The expression is C. Wright Mills'. Mills made a similar critique of Dewey in his *Sociology and Pragmatism*, New York, Oxford, 1966.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 80, my emphasis. See James Campbell, 'Dewey's Method of Social Reconstruction', *Transactions of the Charles Sanders Peirce Society*, XX (1984).

57. See Dewey, 'The Need for a New Party', 'Who Might Make a New Party?' and 'Politics for a New Party', *New Republic*, Vol. 66 (1931); 'The Future of Radical Political Action', Nation, Vol. 136 (1933); 'The Imperative Need for a New Radical Party', *Commonsense*, II (1933). For a general account of the Socialist Party and its relation to the Dewey-led League for Independent Political Action, see Frank A. Warren, *An Alternative Vision: The Socialist Party in the 1930's*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1974, esp. Chapter V.

58. See my *A History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Oxford, Blackwells, 1987.

59. *Freedom and Culture*, p. 97.

60. *Ibid.* p. 94.

61. *Ibid.* p. 94 f.

62. *Loc. cit.*

63. Arthur Lothstein, 'From Privacy to Praxis', p. 80. Lothstein points out that the criticism of "a new kind of Stoicism", was made a month after Dewey's eighty-eighth birthday, in 1947. Dewey argued that on this view, "existence reduces pretty well to what the individual can make out of it on his own hook", and added, "I think they are reactions of people who are scared and have not the guts to face life" (*ibid.*, p. 60f., quoting from a letter to William Daniels, 'Letters of John Dewey to Robert V. Daniels, 1946-50', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XX (October-December, 1959)).

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The Politics After Deconstruction: Rorty, Dewey, and Marx

I. INTRODUCTORY

Political theory is often more backward than forward looking, more concerned with the philosophical foundations of political principles than their *modus operandi*. Such a style of political reflection has many expressions, but most recent and widely familiar are the various contractarian models of social justice found in the writings of authors such as Rawls, Nozick, Dworkin, and Ackerman.[1] What unites these otherwise disparate philosophies is the hope that social justice can be grounded in something more solid and permanent than existing norms and conventions. All are instances of foundational political theory. Deliberately cast at the level of ideal theory, more philosophical than political, immensely imaginative about the rational genesis of political principles, honoring above all logical coherence, foundational theory's goal is to purify political reflection of partisan interests or the influence of any particular locale. Rawls' veil of ignorance and Ackerman's conception of a neutral dialogue illustrate this purification process. Each is a device for capturing the methodological highground from which universal value claims can be safely protected from the assaults of historicism and relativism.

As the number of competing models might suggest, foundational political theory has had at best a limited success. Three criticisms, most frequently aimed at contemporary American efforts to 'ground' justice, have become prominent: the futility of the flight from contexts and cultures, an indeterminacy that comports poorly with axiomatic reasoning, and an insufficient political sensibility. The first criticism argues that foundational theory does not, indeed could not, purify political reflection of all culture or context specific influences. Typical is Stephen Lukes' observation that much of the attractiveness of Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* is traceable to its very familiarity: "it turns out that the motivation, beliefs and indeed the very rationality of Rawls' 'individuals' are recognizably those of some modern, Western, liberal, individualistic men".[2] A different sort of reservation emphasizes the indeterminacy attending foundational political theory's effort to drain political reflection of all cultural bias. To transcend the conventions of our society both Rawls and Ackerman, for example, rely upon a counterfactual, non-empirical, and a priori account of the situation with-

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in which principles of justice are chosen. But precisely because the situation is counterfactual this move expands rather than restricts the number of plausible axioms for grounding justice. The boundaries of the choice situation, the motives of those placed behind the 'veil of ignorance' or participating in the 'neutral dialogue', presuppositions about the issues to be decided, all can be described differently. And, as James Fishkin has recently argued, some slight but plausible alteration in the characterization of the counterfactual condition can lead to drastically different political conclusions.[3]

A third complaint is the most severe. It questions the usefulness of foundational political theory's understanding of the relationship of philosophy to political life. Writing about the future of liberalism, John Dunn has argued that "modern contractarianism offers an abstract and philosophically debilitated reverie on how ethical and political value should be conceived - not a relatively powerful account of how human beings have a good reason to act in the political settings in which they happen to find themselves".[4] Less churlish, but in a similar vein, Benjamin Barber, in a commentary on Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, chides foundational theories for being all prescription and no instrumentation.[5] More exactly, Barber argues that politics itself, not philosophy, is the more appropriate site for the genesis of public standards and rules of justice. Political action and common deliberation have a non-philosophical purpose, "the elucidation of public standards that are not vulnerable to epistemological scepticism because, quite precisely, they claim only to guide action, never to define truth, and are thus always relative rather than absolute, concrete rather than abstract, and determinative, action-oriented rather than speculative, truth-oriented".[6]

These various criticisms question the very notion of finding some aseptic grounds beyond ordinary experience to determine the meaning and legitimacy of key political principles. And while I think that it would be a mistake and exaggeration to dismiss foundational political theory[7], it is hard to avoid the impression that this mode of inquiry is running in place. In any case, I want here to take up the case of those who have sought, *tout de suite*, an alternative to this mode of inquiry. Most generally, this alternative can be described as a 'turn toward contexts' or, less positively, as anti-foundationalism. This 'turn' consists of three complementary adjustments in political reflection. The first or historicist adjustment no longer counts our inability to drain political reflection of all culture or context dependency as a failure. All 'truth', it is argued, is in important ways context-dependent. Therefore, critical inquiry should study those criteria already present within a particular culture or system of thought for judging truth claims.[8] The second or operational adjustment substitutes a logic of practice that is forward

looking or consequentialist for the more formal and genetic logic of foundational thought. Critical of the applicability of ideal theory and foundational inquiries, new emphasis is placed upon the unity of theory and practice. It is essentially the rediscovery of pragmatic and Marxian themes. The last adjustment completes this turn toward contexts by relocating where questions about the meaning, validity, and justness of key values come up for consideration. They are no longer seen as belonging to the realm of axiological reflection, but as coming up for treatment in a theory of modern politics, or, more broadly, modern culture. Foundational thought relies upon distinctions between the rational and the conventional, the universal and the particular. In contrast, for context-dependent reflection, the manner of doing something generates its own criteria for controlling what is to count as a true or just practice. Whether conceptualized as a 'conversation', (Richard Rorty), as 'inquiry' (Dewey), or in terms of a 'movement' (Marx), it is practice itself, not epistemology and axiology, that privileges one or another account of political life.

This divorce of politics from foundational commitments can take a number of forms. And, not surprisingly, non- or anti-foundational accounts of political life often differ in ways every bit as interesting as the contrasts drawn between them and foundational political theories. Grouping together the work of Richard Rorty, John Dewey, and Karl Marx provides an opportunity for exploring such issues. While all three can be considered non-foundational (Dewey and Marx), or anti-foundational (Rorty), thinkers, there is also considerable variety in the nature of their critiques and what each understands by a politics without foundational commitments. If nothing else, such variety should warn against the casual assumption that the only interesting quarrels are between foundationalists and their critics. Disagreements among contextual theorists might amount to a family quarrel, but the disagreements are nonetheless very sharp.

II. RORTY'S DECONSTRUCTIONISM

Richard Rorty has a well-deserved reputation as a powerful exponent of the deconstructionist alternative to foundationalism.[9] As a philosopher, he is understandably interested in a wide range of issues that a political theorist might feel justified in skirting. Yet, his description of philosophy's self-identification as foundational could be applied to much 'backward looking' political theory.

> Philosophy can be foundational in respect to the rest of culture because culture is the assemblage of claims to knowledge, and

> philosophy adjudicates such claims. It can do so because it understands the foundations of knowledge, and it finds these foundations in a study of man-as-knower, of the 'mental processes' or the 'activity of representation' which make knowledge possible. To know is to represent accurately what is outside the mind; so to understand the possibility and nature of knowledge is to understand the way in which the mind is able to construct such representations. Philosophy's central concern is to be a general theory of representation, a theory which will divide culture up into the areas which represent reality well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it at all, despite their pretense of doing so.[10]

Rorty's general objection to viewing philosophy as the Queen of the disciplines appeals to cognitive relativism. There are, he argues, no criteria of rationality for believing something apart from the criteria relative to a particular system of thought and the social practices of a particular epoch. It is wrong to suppose that there could be an ahistorical framework of inquiry for verifying or falsifying competing knowledge claims. Negatively, foundationalism "is the impossible attempt to step outside our skins - the traditions, linguistic and other, within which we do our thinking and criticism - and compare ourselves with something absolute".[11] The attempt itself imagines that reality demands to be described in one or another way. But if, in fact, the only way we ever encounter reality is through some 'chosen description', no independent world exists separate from the 'texts' or interpretations that we construct for making sense of that world. So there is not something 'out there' which texts or interpretations can be rated as more or less accurately representing. All epistemology signals the mistaken belief that "deep down beneath all the texts, there is something which is not just one more text but that to which various texts are trying to be 'adequate'."[12]

To defend this historicist and relativist alternative to foundationalism, Rorty sets out in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* to rewrite the history of philosophy. That rewrite, carried out with great technical skill and polemical verve, focuses upon the ways in which allegedly timeless philosophical problems, and the vocabulary of philosophy itself, are a product of various 'inventions' that have captivated philosophers and so shaped the identity of their subject. By far the most serious invention is the very image of the mind as a 'mirror of nature'. The metaphor summarizes Rorty's thesis that foundationalism presupposes an idea of the mind as a 'great mirror' containing various representations, so that by 'turning inward' we can discover 'foundations' for our beliefs by 'pure, nonempirical methods'. And so philosophy came to be equated with the development of theories of

knowledge - in a word, epistemology. But epistemology - and its successor disciplines such as analytic philosophy, phenomenology, and so forth - is a misbegotten enterprise. What philosophy ignores is that this very imagery has a history, that it is the product of a variety of mutually re-inforcing, but largely arbitrary, moves within the discipline.

> Without the notion of the mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have suggested itself. Without this latter notion, the strategy common to Descartes and Kant - getting into more accurate representations by inspecting, repairing, and polishing the mirror, so to speak - would not have made sense. Without this strategy in mind, recent claims that philosophy could consist of 'conceptual analysis' or 'phenomenological analysis' or 'explication of meanings' or examination of the 'logic of our language' or of 'the structure of the constituting activity of consciousness' would not have made sense.[13]

Calling attention to the power of certain metaphors, the rhetorical appeal of various 'inventions', and how they arise within a changing cultural scene, *e.g.*, as a response to the New Science, the French Revolution, the modern novel, all are tactics for deconstructing the foundational view that philosophy consists in the progressive discovery of a permanent neutral matrix for solving perennial problems.

"There is nothing deep down inside us", Rorty concludes, "except what we have put there ourselves, no criterion that we have not created in the course of creating a practice, no standard of rationality that is not an appeal to such a criterion, no rigorous argumentation that is not obedience to our own conventions."[14] He is prepared to defend this thesis even when confronted with hard cases. He offers, as an instance, Galileo's dispute with Cardinal Bellarmine. Acccording to the latter, Copernican theory violated "scriptural descriptions of the fabric of the heavens". Does the rejoinder that Scriptural evidence is "illogical or unscientific" defeat Bellarmine's position? While Rorty does not deny a distinction between scientific and theological reasoning, he observes that it is anachronistic to apply it to the Galileo-Bellarmine dispute. Criteria of scientific rationality have a history, and it is only their emergence within a particular culture over time that makes them meaningful criteria of verification and falsification.

> The crucial consideration is whether we know how to draw a line between science and theology such that getting the heavens right is a 'scientific' value, and preserving the church, and the general cultural structure of Europe, is an 'unscientific' value... . What determines that Scripture is not an excellent source of evidence for

> the way the heavens are set up? Lots of things, notably the enlightenment's decision that Christianity was mostly just priestcraft. But what were Bellarmine's contemporaries - who mostly thought Scripture to be indeed the word of God - supposed to say to Bellarmine? ... So the question about whether Bellarmine (and, perforce, Galileo's defenders) was bringing in extraneous, 'unscientific' considerations seems to be a question about whether there is some antecedent way of determining the relevance of one statement to another, some 'grid' (to use Foucault's term) which determines what sorts of evidence there could be for statements about the movements of planets. Obviously, the conclusion I wish to draw is that the 'grid' which emerged in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was not there to be appealed to in the early seventeenth century, at the time that Galileo was on trial. No conceivable epistemology, no study of the nature of human knowledge, could have 'discovered' it before it was hammered out. The notion of what it was to be 'scientific' was in the process of being formed ... We are the heirs of three hundred years of rhetoric abut the importance of distinguishing sharply between science and religion, science and politics, science and art, science and philosophy, and so on.[15]

In short, Rorty is advancing a Kuhn-like version of cognitive relativism that locates standards of validity and meaningfulness within a particular paradigm or system of thought.

Historicism and relativism, Rorty insists, do not endanger our life together. Such fears are a red herring, frightful only if we share with 'Philosophy' a need for "foundations to which one might cling, frameworks beyond which one must not stray, objects which impose themselves, representations which cannot be gainsaid".[16] But the need rests upon the unproven assumption that the only 'common ground' for uniting a people is a 'common rationality', *i.e.*, standards of truth that are universal and fundamental. But, in fact, the foundationalist's project, if successful, would undermine dialogic communities. Conversation would be "closed off" by the "hypostatization of some privileged set of descriptions". So, our chief task is simply to keep the conversation going, to combat what John Dewey earlier termed the "quest for certainty".

III. EDIFYING POLITICS

The standing of Rorty's deconstructionist project is not my subject. While I will assess parts of his thesis, I will do so largely by con-

sidering that understanding of politics and political reflection that can be best fitted to his deconstructionism. Now, Rorty rarely addresses the specific question of what sort of politics follows after deconstruction. His attitude towards political experience and reflection upon that experience is largely subsumed under his more general characterization of the move toward a "post-Philosophical culture". But embedded within this account are three themes relevant to the Rortyian version of politics without foundational commitments: 1) a celebration of the Socratic virtues; 2) a certain coyness about the parochialism of the entire subject, *i.e.*, Western politics; and 3) political quietism or a variant of Michael Oakeshott's characterization of politics as the "pursuit of intimations".[17]

What Rorty has in mind by the notion of a "post-Philosophical culture" is the displacement of "systematic philosophy", *i.e.*, epistemology, with "edifying philosophy". Throughout his work, Rorty honors another group of philosophers, notably Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Dewey, whose thought reflects this alternate philosophical sensibility.

> These writers have kept alive the suggestion that, even when we have justified true belief about everything we want to know, we may have no more than conformity to the norms of the day ... [T]he relativists' sense that the latest vocabulary, borrowed from the latest scientific achievement, may not express privileged representations of essences, but be just another of the potential infinity of vocabularies in which the world can be described ... They hammer away at the holistic point that words take their meanings from other words rather than by virtue of their representative character, and the corollary that vocabularies acquire their privileges from the men who use them rather than from their transparence to the real.[18]

These philosophers, Rorty argues, can help us to "change the subject" from epistemology to critical reflection upon the advantages and disadvantages of competing "vocabularies" for apprehending our own time.

Rorty here 'cashes in', to borrow William James's phrase, the results of his deconstructionist project. But it is just at this point that Rorty's thought loses that precision which is the hallmark of his critique of foundationalism. Having gotten beyond epistemology, he now confronts a large range of new issues. Why are some parts of the conversation of mankind more worthy of serious attention than others? How might the Socratic virtues be concretely realized and universalized? Indeed, what is the relationship between edifying philosophy and politics? The most distinguishing feature of Rorty's answers to such questions is a general latitudinarianism - a confident lack of confidence

that anything much can be said on such topics. This posture is dictated in part by Rorty's anti-foundationalist tactics. The easiest way to deny the 'Philosopher' any special office is to render the notion of edifying philosophy very abstract and all-inclusive as 'culture criticism' or even 'literary play'. The culture critic "feels free to comment on anything at all, an all-purpose intellectual, a name dropper without any pretensions to Philosophy, doomed to become outdated".[19] The edifying philosopher is someone who neither claims to possess nor acknowledges that anyone else - poet, physicist, Philosopher - possesses a 'deeper', more 'rational', or 'scientific' kind of knowledge. So what matters is not the permanency of this or that commentary, but those Socratic virtues inherent in the activity itself. Drawing, albeit questionably, upon the pragmatists, Rorty tells us that they teach us that

> the Socratic virtues - willingness to talk, to listen to other people, to weigh the consequences of our actions upon other people - are simply moral virtues. They cannot be inculcated nor fortified by theoretical research into essence. Irrationalists who tell us to think with our blood cannot be rebutted by better accounts of the nature of thought, or knowledge, or logic. The pragmatists tell us that the conversation which it is our duty to continue is merely our project, the European intellectual's form of life ... We are not conversing because we have a goal, but because Socratic conversation is an activity which is its own end.[20]

Rorty's deconstructionist project exposes much that is politically objectionable about the self-confidence and valorization of abstract reason endemic to models of social justice and their corollary - foundationalism. That is, once rid of the illusions and misunderstandings fostered by foundationalism, we will dismiss those philosophies, movements, and parties whose chief claim to our attention is the pretense of knowing something that the rest of us do not know - a formula for the devaluation of a public, *i.e.*, non-foundational politics. But even at its most ambitious, Rorty's politics after deconstruction is pretty thin - largely therapeutic and prophylactic.

It is thin, in part, because Rorty is largely silent about the conditions necessary to the practice of such Socratic virtues. While noting that other non-foundational thinkers such as Habermas have sought to identify that public life or style of politics necessary to the conversation of mankind, Rorty's culture critic or the Rortyian pragmatist is not prepared to take himself that serious.

> The pragmatist knows no better way to explain his convictions than to remind his interlocutor of the position they both are in, the

> contingent starting points they both share, the floating, ungrounded conversations of which they are both members. This means that the pragmatist cannot answer the question 'What is so special about Europe?' save by saying 'Do you have anything non-European to suggest which meets our European standards better?'[21]

As one of his critics has noted, Rorty's anti-foundationalism, with nothing to ground his views beyond the fact that our European way of life is our way of life, "inhibits discursive mobilization of political energies".[22] Echoing Michael Oakeshott's point that the members of society are united by 'civility', as opposed to common agreement or a common ground, Rorty praises "bourgeois liberalism" as simply "the best example of this solidarity we have yet achieved". Beyond that ,we can only regret "that it is irrelevant to most of the problems of most of the population of the planet".[23]

Rorty's coyness or refusal to engage some of the most serious problems of political life is the natural complement to his sweeping rejection of any attempt to ground our judgements. Any attempt to develop a theory of undistorted communication (Habermas), to identify an agent of social progress (Marx), to determine why some parts of the conversation merit more attention (Taylor), is a foundational flirtation - to hope for some functional equivalent for epistemology. So the conclusion to the *Consequences of Pragmatism* seeks to forestall the politicization of theoretical disputes by covering them with a blanket appeal to "keep pragmatic tolerance going as long as we can".[24]

Initially, two understandings of the politics after deconstruction seemed open to Rorty. Having argued that all knowledge is practical and having freed us of the fetishism of 'philosophical problems', he might have taken up the issue of how such communities of practical discourse are to be uncovered and promoted. But Rorty does none of this. Instead, he comfortably concludes that "what matters is our loyalty to other human beings clinging together against the dark, not our hope of getting things right'.[25] This is, of course, a sentiment that is best complemented by political complacency and quietism. There is a sense, then, in which Rorty also depoliticizes the public will. From Rorty's deconstructionist perspective, one can neither question the purposes nor appraise the value of the conversation of mankind for the strong reason that it has neither purposes nor merits - beyond the fact that it is simply our virtue. Politics, *contra* the foundationalists, is at its best when commitments are at their lowest. In effect, this suggests that there is something irrational about doubts that challenge in a strong way the shared beliefs and values validated by the conventions of the moment. If judging a practice requires some criteria of judgment that do not simply reproduce the current practice, it is hard to see how

Rortyian citizens might assess and respond to disputes and dissatisfactions where the meaning attached to various concepts or the merits of established standards are themselves at issue among the various conversationalists. There is a 'givenness' about Rortyian conversation that provides generalized support for the practice itself but that leaves what goes on inside that practice obscure and beyond the reach of critical or political deliberation.

IV. PRAGMATIC POLITICS

Rorty's critique of foundationalism is complemented by his endorsement of pragmatism, especially as represented by John Dewey. One effect of this putative alliance is to understate the more positive and radical nature of the pragmatist alternative to foundationalism. Occupying a position somewhere between, say, Kantian rationalism and Rorty's deconstructionism, pragmatism opposes foundationalism without, however, undercutting attempts to develop a critical posture towards conventional social practices. Put differently, I am suggesting that some fairly characteristic features of pragmatism argue against Rorty's sweeping condemnation of any attempt to elaborate a theory of knowledge. Nothing annoyed Dewey more than critical ploys that postpone rather than facilitate inquiry into how experience can be reconstructed. It is easy to imagine him worrying that Rorty's rhetorical appeal to keep the conversation going, however effective in keeping foundational critics off balance, is one such evasion. In any case, what most interests me about such contrasts is the greater importance that Dewey's pragmatism attaches to the role of political action. With the pragmatist's help, we can carry the turn toward contexts beyond where Rorty leaves it.

An initial way of expressing the differences between Rorty and Dewey is to note the varying nature of their animus against foundational thought. Rorty's objections are more strictly philosophical, directed at the very notion of a theory of knowledge. Dewey's animus is more political, focused on philosophy's failure to link thought to action or to develop strategies for tying cognitive operations to the processes of ordinary experience. The typical sentiment informing Dewey's anti-foundationalism is his insistence that "philosophy, which surrenders its somewhat barren monopoly of dealings with Ultimate and Absolute Reality, will find a compensation in enlightening the moral forces which move mankind and in contributing to the aspirations of men to attain to a more ordered and intelligent happiness".[26] Dewey, like Rorty, is highly critical of most epistemologically centered philosophy. But that criticism is always deployed to make the larger

point that philosophy has failed to address the "problems of men". Not "culture criticism" but the "logic of inquiry" is Dewey's antidote for foundationalism.

What interests Dewey is the role of ideas in experience, their place in people's effort to fit results to intentions, to control and enlarge their interaction with the environment. This relocation of human cognition in an interactionist model of human experience leads Dewey to defend a new standard for determining when we have good reason for believing one thing rather than another.

> If ideas, meanings, conceptions, notions, theories, systems are instrumental to an active reorganization of the given environment, to a removal of some specific trouble and perplexity, then the test of their validity and value lies in accomplishing this work. If they succeed in their office, they are reliable, sound, valid, good, true. If they fail to clear up confusion, to eliminate defects, if they increase confusion, uncertainty and evil when they are acted upon, then are they false. Confirmation, corroboration, verification lie in works, consequences.[27]

This pragmatist version of truth, Rorty fairly notes, is less an attempt to provide new answers to standard textbook issues in epistemology than it is an effort to "change the subject". Certainly, Dewey's writings constantly evidence impatience with the attention that philosophers have lavished upon the nature of the Real or the "logic of general notions". But more is going on here than simply changing the subject or keeping the conversation going. In particular, instrumentalism, a theory of experimental knowledge, nourishes an activist mood and the development of arts of social engineering. Typical is the activist lesson Dewey sees in the history of scientific method.

> It is a complete error to suppose that efforts at social control depend upon the prior existence of a social science. The reverse is the case. The building up of social science, that is, of a body of knowledge in which facts are ascertained in their significant relations, is dependent upon putting social planning into effect ... Physical science ... came into being when men intentionally experimented, on the basis of ideas and hypotheses, with observed phenomena to modify them and disclose new observations ... The change from a passive and accumulative attitude into an active and productive one is the secret revealed by the progress of physical inquiry.[28]

Granting that Dewey's pragmatism is more manipulative and activ-

ist than Rorty's edifying politics, how can Dewey privilege a particular practice or pattern of experience as superior to "what society lets us say"? For Rorty, privileging any experience as a paradigmatic human activity simply keeps going the foundationalist quest for some set of ahistorical, a priori items that will underwrite this or that model of justice. Abandon the quest, Rorty argues, and recall the pragmatist lesson that "there are no constraints on inquiry save conversational ones - no wholesale constraints derived from the nature of objects, or of the mind, or of language, but only those retail constraints provided by the remarks of our fellow inquirers".[29] But this abridges the pragmatic lesson and interrupts Dewey's argument before it can become a critical theory of society.

To understand how Dewey's thought differs from Rorty's, it is important, as Garry Brodsky has argued, to recall some important features of his naturalistic account of human experience.[30] Briefly, Dewey pictures social life as constituted by the activities of individuals as they interact with the environment, broadly understood. Shaped by and, in turn, shaping their social and cultural environment, individuals are constantly engaged in the dynamic adjustment and readjustment of these interactions or "situations".

> The indeterminate situation becomes problematic in the very process of being subjected to inquiry. The indeterminate situation comes into existence from existential causes, just as does, say, the organic imbalance of hunger. There is nothing intellectual or cognitive in the existence of such situations, although they are the necessary conditions of cognitive operations of inquiry.[31]

Conceiving of knowing or deliberation as a practice whereby men seek to reconstruct problematic situations commits Dewey to the view that our task is to deal with those specific problems that define our experience. At this level, Dewey insists that the problems and the ideas appropriate to their solution are context-dependent, *i.e.*, relative to our way of life and the particular situation that gives rise to reflection. But, at another level, the "problematic" and critical reflection are aspects of experience as such, revealing "common patterns in various experiences, no matter how unlike they are to one another in the details of their subject matters".[32] A chief function of theory is to abstract from these "situations" the continuities and common denominators of experience as such. It is this second move that leads Dewey to write so much about the logic of inquiry. Since "all deliberation is a search for a way to act", a response to "being in a hole", inquiry is paradigmatic of a practice done well. The following quotation combines a typical expression of Dewey's anti-foundationalism and one of his many statements about the

unity of theory and practice.

> "Thought" is not a property of something termed intellect or reason apart from nature. It is a mode of directed overt action. Ideas are anticipatory plans and designs which take effect in concrete reconstructions of antecedent conditions of existences. They are not innate properties of mind corresponding to ultimate prior traits of Being, nor are they a priori categories imposed on sense in a wholesale, once-and-for-all way ... Idealism is something experimental not abstractly rational ... Interaction is a universal trait of natural existence. "Action" is the name given to one mode of this interaction, namely, that named from the standpoint of an organism. When interaction has for its consequences the settling of future conditions under which a life-process goes on, it is an "act". If it be admitted that knowing is something which occurs within nature, then it follows as a truism that knowing is an existential overt act.[33]

The analysis of inquiry yields materials, *e.g.*, the social nature of knowledge, the need for communication and a community of inquirers, for a theory of practice that stands as a counterpoint to conventional patterns of action. In short, pragmatism limits the authority of existing "facts and makes possible a grounding of beliefs and knowledge that is not radically contingent upon regnant strands in the conversation. In a statement that Brodsky rightly sees as a rebuff to Rorty's historicism as well, Dewey reminded one of his critics that,

> Instead of holding that "accepted theories" are always the basis for interpretation of what is newly obtained in perceptual experience, he (the pragmatist) has not been behind others in pointing out that such a mode of interpretation is a common source of wrong conclusions; ... I have explicitly pointed out that one chief reason why the introduction of experimental methods mean such a great, such a revolutionary, change in natural science, is that they provide data which are new not only in detail but in kind.[34]

Present experience, which is necessarily unsettled, must be confronted with what it excludes - the existentially emergent conditions uncovered by inquiry itself. Instrumentalism, with its emphasis upon experimentation, appeals to the emergent conditions of inquiry - where ideas guide action and action is the final confirmation of an idea's validity - as a source for materials that allow us to appeal against "what society lets us say".

Whatever the difficulties with these views, it is clear that Dewey is

intent upon identifying an alternative to foundational thought and to versions of historicism that effectively deny the possibility of evaluating competing knowledge claims. Against the foundationalist, Dewey urges the view that all knowledge is provisional and incomplete. Against the strong anti-foundationalist, he urges that ascriptions of belief and knowledge be controlled or constrained by the practice of inquiry itself. In his view, the norms definitory of inquiry at its best and of experience at its best "mirror" one another. It is that "mirror" that Dewey polishes. And part of the polishing is done by linking human cognition to human sociality - seeing them as twin aspects of a whole or complete experience.

Rorty, better than most, understands and makes clear why the pragmatist asserts that knowledge and knowing are holistic. When Rorty talks about the conversation of mankind or Dewey makes reference to "social intelligence", each is locating what is known in the self-understandings, intersubjective agreements, shared concepts that make up a people's life together. Knowledge, Dewey writes,

> is a function of association and communication; it depends upon tradition, upon tools and methods socially transmitted, developed and sanctioned. Faculties of effectual observation, reflection and desire are habits acquired under the influence of the culture and institutions of society, not ready-made inherent powers.[35]

Throughout his writings on inquiry, Dewey reverts to this thesis that all sorts of associational or interactive experiences envelop the processes of thought. From this holist and interactionist perspective, truth does not mirror nature. Rather, it is "a socially organized response, or group of responses on the part of those persons reacting to the statement in question, in a commonly established situation".[36] But, especially in the political writings, Dewey insists that the nature of this "social response" is precisely the issue studied by the logic of inquiry. Dewey constantly worried that this social response or the conversation of mankind is marred by "half-judgments, uncriticized products of custom, chance circumstance, and vested interests". Thus, we cannot evade the need for criteria to judge the practice itself: "It is mere pretense, then, to suppose that we can stick by the *de facto*, and not raise at some points the question of *de jure*, the question of by what right, the question of legitimacy."[37]

The need, then, is for some conception of an ideal pattern of experience that does not simply repeat the traits which are actually found.[38] That pattern is found in the logic of inquiry which introduces a host of familiar pragmatist themes, the importance of communication and participation for managing public affairs, the development of habits

definitive of a more reflexive self, the valorization of political action, creation of a public that serves as a reference for discriminating between *de facto* and *de jure*.

Here, Dewey too "cashes in" on his rejection of backward looking political theory. But, in contrast to Rorty, Dewey's writings seek to develop a common rationality that can nurture a more communal life. That development makes the politics after deconstruction pivotal to whatever more positive successes might accompany the attack upon foundationalism. Rorty's substitution of conversation for epistemology often resembles Dewey's celebration of inquiry and social intelligence. But the resemblance is misleading and misappropriated by Rorty. The pragmatic logic of inquiry is more politically loaded and value-laden than Rortyian conversation. More sensitive to the operative dimension of ideas, Dewey's pragmatic politics is a search for those techniques and that program of action that grounds ideas in their consequences. At the heart of that political program is the development of conditions that, first, make transparent to those implicated in some situation their collective identity and, second, indicate how best to organize their response.

> Wherever there is conjoint activity whose consequences are appreciated as good by all singular persons who take part in it, and where the realization of the good is such as to effect an energetic desire and effort to sustain it in being just because it is a good shared by all, there is in so far a community. The clear consciousness of a communal life, in all its implications, constitutes the idea of democracy.[39]

This turn toward the political is essential since human cognition, at its best, and public action, at its best, are each necessary one to the other. Dewey's move from "foundations to contexts" concludes with a vision of radical democracy that is something less than a model of social justice and something more than edifying politics.

V. INTERLUDE

To this point, I have been emphasizing the differences between Rorty and Dewey as each tries to interpret our situation minus foundational commitments. My theme has been that Dewey's pragmatist alternative to foundationalism possesses the conceptual resources for an opening or turn toward politics, whereas Rorty's deconstructionism either lacks such resources or arbitrarily blocks this political turn. Accenting these differences should not obscure, however, their many common con-

cerns. Each doubts that we are going to make much sense of our social life so long as we remain fixated by how to anchor our interpretations. Each proposes to set sail and leave it up to the members of society how best to appraise and validate the norms and principles that comprise their life together. But precisely because it is a life lived together - conversation, communication, collective problem-solving, the formation of what Dewey terms a public - all are indispensable to the exercise of this new practical reason. Political judgment, one form of practical reason, is no longer, as for the foundationalist, "the discovery or application of moral notions in the sphere of political relations".[40] Rather, for the non-foundational thinker, political deliberation generates its own norms validated by a common will, adhered to because they "work", and open to constant emendation. In sum, it is "the vocabulary of practice rather than of theory, of action rather than contemplation, in which one can say something useful about truth".[41] The unity of theory and practice provides its own materials for a just society and the companion political virtues.

That last sentence's reference to the unity of theory and practice is intended, of course, to suggest that the anti-foundationalist project bears at least a family resemblance to the earlier work done by Karl Marx. Certain caveats are in order, however, before setting off to discuss Marx' thought as it relates to the themes being discussed here. First, one should probably resist the temptation to place Marx in some simple or direct fashion in either the foundationalist or anti-foundationalist camp. That dichotomy forces Rorty, for example, to understate and undervalue Marx' contribution to the move away from foundational political theory. Rorty's Marx is a foundationalist in historicist clothing who is dismissed for "going transcendental". For Marx, he writes, historical processes are the only "Reality" there is and "Truth is Correspondence to that Reality."[42] What is objectionable about this view of Marx is not the observation that Marx has recourse to transcendental arguments. Rather, it is the narrowness of the response to Marx' thought that is elicited by a focus on his anti-foundationalist credentials. Additionally, Rorty assumes that the only legitimate turn toward contexts must be inspired by and even preoccupied with the deconstructionist project. But this seems highly questionable. While Marx' theses about man and society imply certain epistemological commitments, the theses themselves are quite sufficient to place him at some considerable distance from foundational political theory.

A subsidiary purpose of my review of Marx' thought then is to tease apart the foundationalist/anti-foundationalist categories as presented so far. Three adjustments in political reflection, it will be recalled, separate the non-foundational thinker from the backward looking political theorist: historicist, uncovering meanings in terms of "what

society lets us say"; operational, verifying ideas by reference to their applicability for a program of action; and political, substituting the judgments rendered by political action for the decisions dispensed by abstract reason. In each instance, Marx' thought effects just such adjustments in the interpretation of politics. His writings not only alter the relationship between politics and ethics by introducing the economic factor, they also constitute a structure of knowledge more aptly characterized as contextual than as foundational. To use the fact that Marx still does epistemology as a way of placing him in the foundationalist camp obscures more than it reveals. To put this differently, we could just as easily, as the various commentaries of Richard Bernstein suggest, rotate the thought of Rorty, Dewey, and Marx around an axis different from anti-foundationalism - the axis of praxis.[43]

VI. REVOLUTIONARY PRAXIS

One of the more interesting aspects of Marx' thought, as Shlomo Avineri's study suggests, is the extent to which Marx had already completed the turn toward contexts in his earliest writings on Hegel. Marx praises Hegel for many things, but especially for grasping that man's "self-creation" is an historical process and that this process entails alienation and overcoming it.[44] His chief complaint is that Hegel conceives of self-consciousness in abstract terms rather than as the activity of real men. And when he uses Feuerbach to reverse Hegel's logic a chief effect is to link the self as a cognitive agent to the practical needs found in man's social life. Hegel treats the activity of men as a mere "predicate" of thought, imagining the latter to be the active agent or subject in history. For Hegel, "the idea is made the subject and the actual relation of family and civil society to the state is conceived as its internal imaginary activity".[45] But, in fact, the family and civil society are the active elements; Hegel's philosophy has inverted the relationship between philosophy and the world. The effect is that Hegel describes a process both abstract and empty.[46] In *The German Ideology*, Marx summarizes his alternative to Hegel:

> Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process ... In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development

> of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process ... [A]ll the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.[47]

Marx does two things here that contribute to the historicist turn toward contexts. First, he historicizes, so to speak, epistemology; questions about knowing and the known are relocated or assigned to stages in man's development. This methodological move, often characteristic of non-foundational thinkers, provides a new context for the problems that are to be gathered together for treatment as epistemological and political. *Vis-à-vis* the foundationalists, Marx provides materials here for challenging their strategy of grounding justice in hypothetical assumptions about human nature or deploying, say, the social contract mechanism as a way of "descending from heaven to earth". The world that man wants to know is not a world that exists independently of man's practical activity, his relation to it. Leszek Kołakowski has decoded the epistemology implicit in Marx' identification of this different context for knowledge:

> Human consciousness, the practical mind, although it does not produce existence, produces existence as composed of individuals and divided into species and genera. From the moment man in his onto- and phylogenesis begins to dominate the world of things intellectually - from the moment he invents instruments that can organize it and then expresses this organization in words - he finds that world already contructed and differentiated, not according to some alleged natural classification but according to a classification imposed by practical need for orientation in one's environment.[48]

Marx' statement of the context for thought means, along with Rorty and Dewey, that knowledge is holistic, rationality a predicate not of individual will and action but of the contexts and culture that make action possible. That much all three have in common. But when we rotate their thought further, Marx can be positioned closer to Dewey by noting how both, when compared to Rorty, call for a more critical theory of society. A final rotation, however, moves Dewey and Marx apart.

Let me start with a very short comparison of Marx and Rorty. Certainly, the most obvious difference between the two is rooted in

their sharply contrasting political sensibilities and consequent political doctrines. But I have been trying to call attention to different, more methodological factors. For example, Marx, no less than Rorty, holds that a chief task of critical reflection is to understand institutions or beliefs from the inside: "The reform of consciousness consists only in enabling the world to clarify its consciousness, in waking it from its dream about itself, in explaining to it the meaning of its own actions."[49] And one can find plenty of anti-foundationalist sentiments in Marx' writings, usually directed at the unfortunate influence of Kantian liberalism on German idealism or at that ahistorical, abstract individual at the center of rights-based doctrines.[50] The very large gap that separates the two, *pace* Rorty, only marginally turns upon Marx' search for a successor discipline to traditional philosophy. The critical point lies elsewhere.

When Marx argues that human consciousness is historically relative, he takes an additional and decisive step. The interplay between consciousness, time, and place yields material for a scientific study of history. Put somewhat elliptically, Marx' historicist turn is historical.

> In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces ..., the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.[51]

The structure of knowledge understood historically is fitted by Marx to an order of man's development. This historicization of epistemology and "edifying philosophy" greatly expands the materials relevant to how knowledge-claims and consciousness come up for treatment by introducing the economic factor. It also explains why it is difficult and misleading to interpret Marx as either a foundationalist or as an anti-foundationalist. The thrust of his contextualism lies elsewhere.

When Marx, for example, examines man's activity in the *1844 Manuscripts*, he wants to explain two things. On the one hand, he wants to expose the ahistorical error of those who equate certain features of man's identity prevalent at a given moment with the essential nature of man. Various institutions and social conceptions, *e.g.*, rights, the "free State", arise out of the activities of men as they seek to satisfy their wants in varying situations. A correct study of political economy teaches that human nature is nothing other than the "ensemble of social relations". But, on the other hand, Marx also wants to explain how it is that man comes to be a social being with distinctive capacities and potentialities, especially the capacity for seeing himself as a social

being. Again, the story of how "society itself produces man as man" and "society is produced by him"[52] is the subject of alienation and its overcoming.

This is hardly the place to branch off into a consideration of Marx' writings on political economy or his theory of praxis. But both make ideas better suited for historical study by tying them to the practices that change men and their social relations. It is that "history" to which questions about man's nature or the "truth" of a theory belong: "The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question."[53] Marx forces us to consider the history of Rorty's conversation, its regularities and patterns, how it throws up one or another moral paradigm. And Rortyian deconstructionism, so far as I can tell, is theoretically powerless to prevent this sort of expansion of the non-foundationalist alternative to foundationalism. And that is just as well, since, as Richard Bernstein argues, Marx' thought challenges us to penetrate the significance of the "context" within which our lives occur.

> Marx had a profound understanding of the ways in which men are what they do, of how their social praxis shapes and is shaped by the complex web of historical institutions and practices within which they function and work ... . The more deeply we penetrate this situation ... the closer we can come to the real possibility of radical transformation. The reason why such critical understanding can be efficacious is because it speaks to man's deepest desires and needs - his search for liberation and emancipation where freedom becomes a concrete reality ... no thinker has so vividly and dramatically held before us this challenge and goal.[54]

Rorty's anti-foundationalism emphasizes the importance of the analysis of practices and intersubjective meanings, but it is only with Marx and Dewey that this turn acquires some direction and critical bite. All three are opposed to foundationalism. But if both Dewey's and Marx' writings rebuff Rorty, this suggests that their thought should in some sense be closer together. In fact, the line from Dewey to Marx, or vice versa, seems to me far straighter. Both link considerations of people's cognitive activities to the demands placed upon them to interact with and transform their environment. Each conceives of knowledge-claims as having reference to the power of a theory to provide an orientation to practice, *i.e.*, to carry forward that transformation. There is a very rough parallel here between Dewey's interactionist model of experience and Marx' characterization of human praxis. For Dewey, growth in individual powers and freedom is a function of a certain type of experience. People are free not because, for example, they possess

an autonomous rational will, but because they are part of a larger situation characterizable as a harmonious or determinate interchange between the individual and the environment. Marx similarly is arguing that people's cognitive activities are only one factor in the situation that they confront. That situation is also constituted by the permanent interplay between their needs and the products or objects of their activity: "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production."[55] And, recalling Dewey's theory of problematic situations, the more successful people become in understanding society, enlarging their control over it, the more their own identity is expressed in their activities:

> The transformation, through the division of labour, of personal powers, relationships into material powers [*i.e.*, alienation], cannot be dispelled by dismissing the general idea of it from one's mind, but can only be abolished by the individuals again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labour. This is not possible without the community. Only in community [with others] has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible.[56]

I want to be careful here. I do not mean to equate the way in which Dewey and Marx make the next, "operational" move toward contexts. I am simply calling attention to certain similarities in how each, first, ties cognitive operations to practical activities and, second, how the practical tasks set for knowledge require the collaboration or co-operation of other human beings. These similarities point to another area of substantial agreement. Both argue that standards of knowledge such as sociality are improperly conceived as formal marks of a theory. They are instead attributes of a certain type of practice. Where, for example, foundational thought tries to discover theoretically some common measure, *e.g.*, utility, rights for the adjustment of individual wills, Dewey and Marx argue, respectively, that citizens uncover a common ground as they solve problems or carry out a revolution. Formal criteria of knowledge are re-identified by both as a program of action.

But there is a large difference between problem-solving and revolutionary praxis. Enough has been said about Dewey's account of experience and inquiry to intimate why in social and political matters he is a pluralist - albeit of a rather more radical nature than is commonly supposed.[57] We can partially, but only partially, explain Marx' more radical politics by noting that materialism, man's productive activity, is

a context for a theory of history that eventuates in the doctrine that the proletariat *qua* universal class is the agent of universal human emancipation. What Dewey termed "being in a hole" is no longer identified as one moment in a pattern of generic human experience. With Marx, Deweyan "indeterminate situations" enter the historical context and are particularized as different stages in the overcoming of alienation. Experience is not just, as with Dewey, problem-presenting. The problems themselves are presented historically, "mankind always sets itself such tasks as it can solve; since looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself only arises when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation".[58] Both the problems of men, *i.e.*, alienation, and philosophy's dilemmas are resolved in revolutionary practice.

> Communism [is] the positive transcendence of private property, or human self-estrangement, and therefore [is] the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore [is] the complete return of man to himself as a social, *i.e.*, human being... This communism, as fully-developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully-developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man - the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be the solution.[59]

Marx makes a large number of claims here: revolutionary praxis alone satisfies philosophy's claim to know the world; the particular interest of the working-class movement is *ipso facto* the realization of universal values; Communism signals a stage in history where individuals' needs as self-conscious and social beings are realized. These claims have been widely considered by many commentators on Marx, and so I will pass over them. I want to close with a different point. On the one hand, claims like these are not easily imaginable within the terms foundational political thought sets for itself. On the other hand, the fact that Marx' adjustments yield material for a scientific study of history and that he re-identifies the universality of ideas as the movement of the proletariat justify excluding him from Rorty's anti-foundationalist category. But it may well be that this simply marks the limits of how much we can say about Marx' theory in light of the methodological shift from foundations to contexts.

VII. A CONCLUSION

Proposals for restructuring political inquiry so that it is less "backward looking" and more "contextual" are themselves political. Conceiving of rationality as a conversation, a pattern of experience, or as revolutionary practice are not just shifts in theoretical discourse. How the turn toward contexts is carried out controls the relationship between a theorist and his subject. The way in which Richard Rorty, for example, pursues his deconstructionist project precludes any attempt by him to transfigure or otherwise critically confront the "objects" of his study. All "texts" are created equal, and no good reason can be given for why the conventions or practices of some particular text should prevail. The conversation of mankind is approached in what Henry Kariel, in a different context, describes as an indicative mode, moving "as close to the phenomena under study as [one] can, ... to embrace the prevailing definitions of 'event', 'problem', 'fact', 'cause', and 'decision'".[60] The attendant mood informing the work that Rorty does in this mode is largely commendatory of whatever text is in effect. Texts do not provide valid or right answers; they are simply "hammered out". But this interpretative arbitrariness loses much of its attractiveness when we recall, along with Marx and Dewey, that not all participants equally shape or benefit from existing texts. What, from the perspective of anti-foundationalism, seems a methodological virtue - interpretative arbitrariness - is, when politically translated, the familiar vice of illegitimacy. Texts need not be "true", but Rorty is powerless to explain to those dissatisfied with a society's conventions and practices why they too should obey or identify with them. Political power often speaks to us in an imperative voice, and deconstructionists need to be reminded that political systems "are not conversations from which one can gracefully exit".[61]

Both Dewey and Marx reinterpret experience and established practices. Each carries out his move to contexts in an activist rather than a quiescent spirit. Dewey's conceptions of such notions as ideas, deliberation, and action - the linking of the known to the processes of knowing - serve the very pragmatic goal of closing the gap between social relations and institutions, on the one side, and people's desires and moral sensibilities, on the other. The activists' epistemology explains the political activism. And within Dewey's non-foundationalism one can identify functional equivalents for certain characteristic concerns of foundational theory. He too feels that modes of interaction, rules and public power must express something more than partisan bargaining or the "hammering out of a text". "Problem-solving" is not just another version of trial-and-error rationalism. For Dewey, it is a mode of practice that itself becomes the site of a socially

shared sense that rules and power express man's public life or what Marx termed his social being.

Marx' account of consciousness and social relations similarly aims at enabling us to shape social relations to our purposes. This much, which is quite a lot, Dewey and Marx have in common. Some of the major differences between Dewey's brand of liberal reformism and Marx' radicalism can be traced back to how they turn toward contexts, *e.g.*, Dewey's identification of problems as dislocations within an interactionist model of experience versus Marx' conception of conflict as alienation and class division. But to get further into those differences requires closer study of their respective doctrines as purported solutions to the "problems of men". That is, Marx' claim for revolutionary praxis, whatever its implied epistemology, is best studied in relation to his account of alienation, as a philosophy of man and to the writings on class and political economy. Similarly, Dewey's pragmatic politics should be judged by its success in revealing interesting or important problems and by its ability to help men carry out a reconstruction of experience. In short, it matters less whether Dewey's test for the "truth" of an idea is incontrovertible than it matters whether it is useful. In considering such issues and in comparing radical to pragmatic politics, reflection upon the role of philosophical reflection itself no longer has much to add.

NOTES

1. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1971; Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, New York, Basic Books, 1974; Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1978; Bruce Ackerman, *Social Justice in the Liberal State*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1980.

2. Steven Lukes, *Essays in Social Theory*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1977, p. 189. For Lukes' position on cognitive and moral relativism, see Essays 7 & 8.

3. James S. Fishkin, 'Liberal Theory, Strategies of Reconstruction' in Alfonso J. Damico (ed.), *Liberals on Liberalism*, Totowa, NJ, Roman & Littlefield, 1986.

4. John Dunn, *Rethinking Modern Political Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 163.

5. Benjamin R. Barber, 'Deconstituting Politics, Robert Nozick and Philosophical Reductionism', *Journal of Politics*, February, 1977, 39, 2-23.

6. *Ibid.* p. 13.

7. In a defense of political theory from the criticisms of John Gunnell, Richard Flathman says many sensible things about what can and cannot be claimed for foundational political theory. Flathman, 'Philosophy, Political Theory, and Practice', unpublished ms. Also, see John G. Gunnell, *Political Theory: Tradition and Interpretation*, Cambridge, Winthrop Publishers, 1979.

8. John Dewey explains this switch in terms of the difference between "truth" and "validity". "There is a distinction", he writes, "made in my theory between validity and truth. The latter is defined, following Peirce, as the ideal limit of indefinitely continued inquiry. This definition is, of course, a definition of truth as an abstract idea .... Apparently, Mr. [Bertrand] Russell takes the statement to apply here and now to determination of the truth or falsity of a given proposition - a matter which, in the sense of validity as just stated, is determined, on my theory, by a resolved situation as the consequence of distinctive operations of inquiry. ... The 'truth' of any present proposition is, by the definition, subject to the outcome of continued inquiries; its 'truth', if the word must be used, is provisional; as near the truth as inquiry has as yet come, a matter determined not by a guess at some future belief but the care and pains with which inquiry has been conducted up to the

present time." 'Experience, Knowledge and Value, A Rejoinder', in Paul Arthur Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, New York, Tudor, 1939, pp. 572-573.

9. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, and *Consequences of Pragmatism,* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1982. For a helpful analysis of Rorty's central themes, see Richard J. Bernstein, 'Philosophy in the Conversation of Mankind', *Review of Metaphysics*, June, 1980, XXXIII, 745-775.

10. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 3.

11. *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. xix.

12. *Ibid.* p. xxxvii.

13. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 12.

14. *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. xlii.

15. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, pp. 329-330.

16. *Ibid.* p. 315.

17. The phrase, "pursuit of intimations", is explained in Oakeshott's now justifiably famous essay on 'Political Education'. See *Rationalism in Politics*, New York, Basic Books, 1962, pp. 111-136. Rorty would seem to agree down the line with Oakeshott about the type of political understanding and action that makes sense once we understand what theory can and cannot do. He has, for example, explained that he intends the phrase "conversation of mankind" to stand for the entire human enterprise in a fashion much after Oakeshott's essay on 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind'. See 'A discussion, Rorty, Taylor, and Dreyfuss', *Review of Metaphysics*, September, 1980, 34, p. 52.

18. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, pp. 367-368. I have slightly altered the order of the sentences.

19. *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. xl. Cf. "To drop the notion of the philosopher as knowing something which nobody else knows so well would be to drop the notion that his voice always has an overriding claim on the attention of the other participants in the conversation." *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 392.

20. *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 172.

21. *Ibid.* pp. 173-174.

22. William E. Connolly, 'Mirror of America', *Raritan*, Summer, 1983, p. 129.

23. *Consequences of Pragmatism*, pp. 207, 210.

24. *Ibid.* p. 229.

25. *Ibid.* p. 166.

26. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1957, pp. 26-27.

27. *Ibid.* p. 156.

28. Dewey, 'Social Science and Social Control', in Joseph Ratner (ed.), *Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy*, New York, Random House, Modern Library, 1939, pp. 951-952.

29. Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 165.

30. In making this comparison, I have often followed Garry Brodsky's 'Rorty's Interpretation of Pragmatism', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 1982 18, 311-337.

31. Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, New York, Henry Holt, 1938, pp. 105-107.

32. Dewey, 'Having an Experience', in *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1960, p. 160.

33. Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1929, pp. 166-167, 244-245.

34. Dewey, 'Propositions, Warranted Assertibility, and Truth', in *Problems of Men*, New York, Philosophical Library, 1946, p. 337. Cited in Brodsky, p. 331. In a less technical statement of this point, Dewey writes that "the lost man [confronted with a problematic situation] has no alternative except either to wander aimlessly or else to conceive this inclusive environment; and ... this conception is just what is meant by idea. It is not some little physical entity or piece of consciousness-stuff, but is the interpretation of the locally present environment in reference to its absent portion". *Essays in Experimental Logic*, New York, Dover Publications, 1953, pp. 238-239.

35. Dewey, *The Public and its Problems*, Chicago, Swallow Press, 1927, p. 158. Another statement of the connection between human cognition and human sociality reminds us that "indeterminate situations" are never merely personal. "The incompleteness is not personal. I mean by this that the situation is not confined within the one making the judgment; the practical judgment is neither exclusively nor primarily about one's self ... [I]t is a judgment about one's self only as it is a judgment about the situation in which one is included, and in which a multitude of other factors external to self are included." *Essays in Experimental Logic*, p. 337.

36. H. S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism*, p. 151. Cited in Brodsky, p. 324.

37. Dewey, *op.cit.* p. 6.

38. For one of Dewey's more polemical defenses of pragmatism's "forward looking" nature, see 'The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy', in *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom.*

39. Dewey, *The Public and its Problems*, p. 149.

40. Isaiah Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958, p. 58.

41. Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 162.

42. Rorty, *Ibid.* pp. xv, 207.

43. The comparisons between Dewey and Marx can be found in Richard J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971. For his comparison of Rorty with those working in the Marxist tradition, *i.e.*, Habermas, see *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983, esp. pp. 186-231.

44. Shlomo Avineri, *The Social & Political Thought of Karl Marx,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp. 58-59. Also, see the excellent comparison by John Plamenatz, *Karl Marx's Philosophy of Man*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, esp. chaps. III & IV. In a more general sense, my thoughts on how Marx carries out various adjustments to change the context of political thought so that it becomes a theory of practice has been greatly influenced by Robert Denoon Cumming's *Human Nature & History*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1969, 2 volumes. J. S. Mill is the central figure of Cumming's study. But the books are a brilliant study of how political theories differ according to the radically divergent contexts, psychological, moral, historical within which they study political problems.

45. Marx, 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right', in Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York, W.W. Norton Company, 1978, 2nd edition, p. 16.

46. In *The Holy Family*, Marx ridicules the emptiness of German speculative philosophy. "If from real apples, pears, strawberries, and almonds I form the general idea 'Fruit', if I go further and imagine that my abstract idea 'Fruit', derived from real fruit, is an entity existing outside me, is indeed the true essence of the pear, the apple, *etc.*, then, in the language of speculative philosophy, I am declaring that 'Fruit' is the substance of the pear ... I have extracted from them and then foisted on them, the essence of my idea. By this method one attains no particular wealth of definition." Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977, edited by David McLellan, pp. 135-136.

47. Tucker, *op.cit.* pp. 154-155.

48. Leszek Kołakowski, 'Karl Marx and the Classical Definition of Truth' in *Toward A Marxist Humanism*, p. 46. Cited in Bernstein, *Praxis and Action*, p. 73.

49. Tucker, *op.cit.* p. 15.

50. Marx' 'Essay on the Jewish Question' is the *locus classicus* for the attack upon the language of rights in civil society. That attack has generated much commentary on the differences between a Marxian theory of justice and more juridical, *i.e.*, liberal theories. See Allen E. Buchanan, *Marx and Justice, The Radical Critique of Liberalism*, Totowa, NJ, Rowman & Allanheld, 1982.

51. Tucker, *op.cit.* p. 4.
52. Tucker, *Ibid.* p. 85.
53. Thesis II on Feuerbach.
54. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action*, pp. 306-307.
55. Tucker, *op.cit.* p. 150.
56. *Ibid.* p. 197.
57. See Damico, 'Impractical America, Reconsideration of the Pragmatic Lesson', *Political Theory*, February, 1986, 14, 83-104.
58. Tucker, *op. cit.* p. 5.
59. *Ibid.* p. 84.
60. Kariel, 'Neither Sticks Nor Stones', *Politics and Society*, Winter, 1973, p. 183. Cited by William Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983, 2nd edition, p. 180.
61. Sanford Levinson, 'On Dworkin, Kennedy, and Ely: Decoding the Legal Past', *Partisan Review* (1984) LI:263.

PART III

THE METAPHYSICAL CONTEXT

GERALD J. GALGAN

Marx and Dewey on the Unity of Theory and Practice

When Pythagoras was asked what he meant when he called himself a lover of wisdom, he responded, according to Cicero[1], with a simile of the crowd at a religious festival. Some men are drawn to the festival to sell their goods, to make money; others come to exhibit their physical prowess in the hope of gaining fame; a few come only to admire the beautiful works of art and the fine speeches and talented performances at the festival.

So also in the great "festival" of human life, men come from afar, crossing each other's lives and bringing with them their notions of what this great festival is about. Some try to extend themselves by what they can gather and barter: wealth wrenched from the flux of time is the mark they wish to leave behind them when life is done and finished. Others would attempt a more difficult and precarious extension of themselves: they want to be, to exist, in the eyes of those engaged in the festival; fame, not wealth, is the goad to their desires, the mark they would leave behind when their role in the festival is over and done.

Only the very few stand at the fringes of the buying and selling, the posturing and mongering, distant from the centers of power and its brokerage where the actors are being applauded. Devoid of the inclination to extend themselves by either commodity or honor in the eyes of other men, these few desire only to contemplate the order to be found in the festival itself - the intelligibility of the whole and, ultimately, the ground of that intelligibility, some kind of *arche* or first principle at work in life itself.

The three lives of Pythagoras become the four lives of Aristotle.[2] The voluptuous life (the life of pleasure-seeking) and the life of wealth, as well as the political life, which identifies the good with honor, are all contrasted with the theoretical life of the philosopher who strives to contemplate the eternal truths. "Men of refinement" would take seriously only the political and philosophical lives. The meaning of the great festival of human life is enshrined, for Aristotle, in the tension between the political and philosophical lives, the lives of pleasure and wealth having been put aside. The tension between politics and philosophy is translated into the distinction between *practice* (*praxis*) - the life of political partnership in the city (*polis*) - and *theory* (*theoria*) - the life of detachment from active involvement in the city, a life alien to the festival of human life going on in the city, that is, to civilization.

W. J. Gavin (ed.), Context over Foundation, 209–227.
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Civilization requires a tension between the theoretical and political lives, as Plato's account of the end met and embraced by Socrates would seem to indicate. For a brief historical moment, Athens may have been noted - and, therefore, forever remembered - for its wisdom and power.[3] But, in the final analysis, the philosophical and the political cannot attain any lasting union. Though each must have its prerogatives and proper excellences, theory and practice cannot as such constitute a unity.

The very etymologies here seem to suggest the tension between - certainly the absence of a unity of - theory and practice. *Theoros*, though usually taken to mean a spectator at the games, seems to have meant originally the envoy sent to consult an oracle. The plural, *theoria*, designated a group of envoys which a city delegated to attend the religious festival of another city.[4] The *theoria* could not, then, be part of the festival; they were "observers" from an alien city. Thus, by extension, the philosophical soul is "on loan" from another world, as Plato suggests in the *Phaedo*, caught at the festival but not a part *of* it, alien to the city and its network of power. Socrates never left Athens, to be sure, but he was never a politician in it. The philosopher is an observer whose only concern is the meaning of that festival which is the life of the city, a meaning that cannot be grasped by those involved in the pleasure, pain, wealth, power, and fame of the festival of civilization.

The etymology of *praxis* also suggests an inevitable disjunction of practice and theory, political power and philosophy. The root here seems to be *prasso* which can mean "I accomplish" (for example, a journey) or "I manage" (for example, the affairs of the city) or "I do or fare" (for example, ill or well[5], as in "How'm I doin'?"). There can be little or no detachment of the accomplisher from what is accomplished, little or no separation of the manager from what is managed, little or no apartness of the doer from the good or bad that is done. The deed is inseparable from the doer, and in political life the man of great deeds *exists* in and through his deeds, exists only as a participator in the festival: without the life of the city he has no soul. Immortality, for him, can be only what the votaries at the festival remember of these deeds, when their doer is forever done with doing. How, then, could there ever be a unity of theory and practice? If anything, their very disunity is the moving force for civilization, for the endlessly recurring festival of human or political life which is essentially going nowhere. Pythagoras' simile implies the non-directional - even recurring and cyclical - character of human or political life. For to what could a festival lead? Its meaning is in its own comings and goings, its own doings and undoings, carefully charted by the man of theory who, though locked into it, is not part of it, determined as he is to display the ground of meaning for these comings and goings, doings and

undoings.

This ground is not a goal toward which the festival or the *polis* is moving, but rather an intelligibility inherent in nature which is at best approximated and at worst perverted by practice. History has no place to go, and the philosophical few know this by virtue of having transcended the festival in their ambassadorial status, by virtue of their attempt to think immortal thoughts, and they alone, as Aristotle would have it, if anyone at all, can be said to be happy.[6] The philosophical soul, perhaps, is alone truly immortal, but this is not a soul belonging to an individual; it is only "on loan". Having come to love the universal and eternal order of things, the things that transcend and survive particularity and the death of individuals, the philosophical few are emissaries from another and higher city, the only true republic, built on the equality of the greatest thinkers. And this is the city of the mind, the city built only in speech, where, as Plato would have it, philosophers alone are rulers.[7] The immortality of thinking turns out to be the only true immortality, a thinking which the god (proposed by Aristotle) does all the time[8] (that is why he is god) and which a few blessed men, the philosophers, do some of the time; and they do it for others as well as for themselves.

As for the really great political leaders, theory and practice come close to being parallel lines, but in the Euclidean space of the city, these lines never meet. In the worst of cities, the lines of theory and practice diverge, going off in different directions. And even in the best of cases, there can be no convergence, no *nexus* of theory and practice, philosophy and power. Aristotle's opposing of *praxis* and *poiesis*, that is, practice and making, seals the fate of the breach between theory and practice.

In productive activity, the 'end', the thing made, is distinguishable from the making, unlike practice or doing, where the end of the doing is nothing distinguishable from the act of doing itself, especially if well-executed. *Poiesis*, that is, productive activity, does permit a certain distance between the end of the activity and its performer. The ship is separable from the shipbuilder, unlike the deeds of Pericles, which are inseparable from Pericles and always call up his name whenever they are remembered. Remembering Phidias, however, is by no means necessary for the enjoyment of his statues. But how could Phidias be as significant as Pericles in the great festival of political life or civilization? Phidias provides the votaries at the festival with particular things, statues which delight the eyes and perhaps please the mind (insofar, for example, as their symmetry parallels a universal order of things or forms), but the actions of Pericles themselves improve the partnership of the votaries in the civic festival. And beyond both Phidias and Pericles are Thales and Anaximander, the philosophers, who have transcended the particular and stolen a glimpse

of the universal order of things, of the eternal, glimmering through the comings and goings of the festival.[9]

Thales and Anaximander glimpse the eternal, and Socrates the Good, which is indicated by its absence in the lives of wicked men and by its imperfect presence in, or participation by, the political and moral benefactors of the city. Yet all of them - Phidias and Pericles, Socrates and Anaximander - will die, just as surely as the vulgar voluptuaries and money-mongers at the festival. The civic festival alone goes on, with no historical goal or purpose, a kind of endless periodic resumption of civilization in celebration of we know not what, except to call it our mortality, our finitude, in the face of the eternal, unbending, deathless order of nature.

Ultimately, this classical account of the disunity of theory and practice must end in the deepest cynicism of those for whom the festival has grown sour, the analogate of old age, of weariness with life itself, the most deep-seated fatigue in the face of the endlessness of it all. Yet there was, in the Greek vision, the glory of the celebration of life in death, of immortality in mortality, the "happy" representation of the life of heroic deeds and heroic thoughts in their inevitable disjunction, in contrast to 'The Book of the Dead', the mummies of Egyptian civilization.

* * *

This classical account of the disjunction of theory and practice in the forum of the civic festival is rejected by Karl Marx and John Dewey, each asserting a unity on grounds which, each would insist, are "philosophical". Thus the famous remark of Marx: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it"[10], a remark which has its foundation in the assertion that "Social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the *comprehension* [emphasis added] of this practice."[11] In effect, for Marx, to reach an adequate comprehension of the world is to change the world itself in a radical fashion.[12] As was the case for Hegel before him, the image, the notion, the metaphor of human life in the city as a great festival, a celebration of mortality, in which human life is adjusted to the order of nature, has vanished, and in its place has arisen an "unhappy" consciousness for which the world is not as it ought to be. But, unlike Hegel, there is no longer for Marx a deep-seated faith in the healing and reconciling power of speculative thought in and of itself.[13]

The situation is not unlike what it was for Dewey. As Dewey remarks, if "things undergo change without thereby ceasing to be real, there can be no formal bar to knowing being one specific kind of change in things, nor to its test being found in the successful carrying

into effect of the kind of change intended. If knowing be a change in reality, then the more knowing reveals this change, the more transparent, the more adequate, it is."[14] For Dewey, too, the Hegelian confidence in the healing and reconciling power of speculative thought in and of itself is rejected in favor of the belief that "intelligence develops within the sphere of action for the sake of possibilities not yet given".[15] Men are weak, for Dewey, in "ideal matters" precisely "because intelligence is divorced from aspiration. The bare force of circumstance compels us onwards in the daily detail of our beliefs and acts, but our deeper thoughts and desires turn backwards. When philosophy shall have co-operated with the course of events and made clear and coherent the meaning of the daily detail, science and emotion will interpenetrate, practice and imagination will embrace. Poetry and religious feeling will be the unforced flowers of life. To further this articulation and revelation of the meanings of the current course of events is the task and problem of philosophy in days of transition."[16]

What has happened with Dewey and Marx is that the classical account of the festival of human civic life has been radically altered. They are no longer talking about a directionless history; history, for them, as with Hegel, is going somewhere. But, unlike Hegel, who was convinced that "theoretical endeavour", that is, the universalizing thrust of pure speculation, "attains much more in this world than practical work"[17], both Marx and Dewey perceive the significance of theory primarily, essentially, perhaps only in terms of the particulars of practice. Thus Marx sees the direction of history in terms of a radical alteration of the particular structures of the historical order through and as the very comprehension of that order. And Dewey sees the direction of history in terms of an interpenetration of the practical and aesthetic through the comprehension of the intelligibility of "the current course of events," that is, the present particular or the particular present.

In sum, when they speak of human or political life, both Marx and Dewey are no longer talking about a festival, a periodically recurring celebration of life in death, of human mortality in terms of, or indicated by, an eternal order which transcends particulars. On the contrary, both are reporting on an historical "being" with a direction, a developmental reality, in which the course of events is possessed of a goal, a *telos*, which does not as such transcend those events, a goal which they claim to know - and to know "philosophically". In a word, for Dewey and Marx, the festival has become a *pilgrimage*, and the pilgrimage is not to the mere particularity of an "empty tomb"[18], but to a future and particular social order which will be better than the one in which we live now, by virtue of a concurrence, previously impossible, the "unity" of theory and practice. But in the process, the content of both theory and practice has changed for both Marx and Dewey.

Theory is no longer concerned with the articulation of the eternal

and immutable. The intelligibility of the particular has taken the place of both the classical eternal and immutable order of things and the Hegelian "Absolute Spirit", which was, perhaps, "the last comprehensive version of the effort to explain the Whole by identifying its first principle as conceptually accessible".[19] Dewey's "daily detail", as well as Marx' essentially "practical" social life, devoid of mystical or mysterious overtones, are pre-eminently particular, here-and-now, concrete realities. In the case of Marx, the ideal of pure theory or "seeing" would have us believe that it

> accomplishes within itself the negation of its particularity; seeing is this overcoming which, from a point of view, allows it to be a gaze, to raise itself above the gazer to the level of what is seen. It is in this manner that what is seen, as it is in itself and for all, is reached. All theory rests upon the transcendence operative within it and constituting it as a faculty of universal objectivity. As for praxis, however, it does not raise itself above itself and at no time does it dismiss the particularity and individuality that are consubstantial with it. That praxis is subjective means that it remains within the internal experience of itself, that it is this lived tension of an existence shut up within the experience of its own act and coinciding with its deed. It is precisely nothing but its deed, but it is all that it does, and it undergoes its doing without the least respite, incapable of any distance on itself, of escaping from itself. In this principal impossibility of escaping from itself and of unfolding the stepping back of a distance on itself, selfness (*ipseitas*) takes shape and experiences itself: in this way, the monad of originary being as production is radically opposed to the universality of thought.[20]

But the overcoming of particularity in pure theory is illusory; there is no pure theory or seeing, for Marx. Only the comprehension of the particular, a production which is itself knowledge, can constitute the proper content of theory.

The same point is made by Dewey, when he observes that the methods of modern experimental science "substituted for an alleged regulative model a formula which was the integrated function of the *particular phenomena* [emphasis added] themselves, a formula to be used as a method of further observations and experiments and thereby tested and developed. ... Physical knowledge started on a secure career when men had courage to start from the irregular scene [of particulars] and to treat the suggestions to which it gave rise as methods for instituting new observations and experiences."[21] Such methods, for Dewey, no longer attempt to locate some "fixed form or essence behind each process of change", but instead attempt "to break down apparent

fixities and to induce changes"[22], for physical nature is now seen to be "something that has to be changed", subjected to experiment, "in order to be truly known".[23]

The laying bare of the intelligibility of mutable particulars - this is now the "work" of theory for Marx and Dewey. Theory is no longer meant for beholding, for contemplation, and neither Dewey nor Marx thinks of himself as an alien emissary from another world, the city of the mind. Dewey rejects the claim of traditional philosophy to demonstrate "the existence of a transcendent, absolute or inner reality" and to reveal "the nature and features of this ultimate and higher reality", that is, the claim of speculative philosophy to be "in possession of a higher organ of knowledge" than that found in "ordinary practical experience".[24] In a similar fashion, for Marx, the task of the historical dialectic of philosophy, "once the other-world of truth has vanished," is "to establish the truth of this world"[25], so that "theory, too, becomes a material force once it seizes the masses".[26]

Far from conceiving of themselves as "observers" from another and higher city, Marx and Dewey think of themselves as pilgrims, on the path, respectively, of an historical and cultural dialectic - as wayfarers who are involved, in their theories, in a productive activity which is essentially the same kind of productive activity as that of any other traveler on this path. They harbor no claim that what they do philosophically is a divine activity - like what the Aristotelian god does all of the time. And yet, they are convinced that they know where the pilgrimage - the historical or cultural dialectic - is going.

Not only the content of theory but also that of practice has changed for Marx and Dewey. Practice for them is no longer exclusively or even essentially political, as it was in the classical account of the disjunction of theory and practice. Marx makes clear that "reality" or the "thing" (*Gegenstand*) ought to be conceived "subjectively" as practice, that is, as "human sensuous activity".[27] For Dewey, too, practice has come to mean something other than political deeds, giving it the "widest possible range of application", an application which is itself "the means of the deepest verification".[28]

"Human sensuous activity", for Marx, denotes the sense in which "the radical immanence of life", rather than the "representation of consciousness", constitutes the essence of the truth (now practical) to be sought by theory.[29] As Marx puts it: "It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness."[30] This life, a necessarily sensuous life, might be said to parallel the voluptuous life, the life merely of pleasure-seeking and avoidance of pain, which Aristotle said was disdained by "men of refinement".

Likewise, for Dewey, the notion of practice, with the "widest possible range of application", involves a notion of thinking in which every successive stage is a "conclusion in which the meaning of what

has *produced* it is condensed" [emphasis added], so that "conclusion and premise are reached by a procedure comparable to the use of boards and nails in making a box; or of paint and canvas in making a picture", and the result is "judged in the light of its method of production".[31] This notion of practice, as maximized application of thought to production, might be said to parallel the life of wealth, that is, of production of commodities, which Aristotle also held to be disdained by "men of refinement".

In effect, in place of the political, Marx inserts the sensuous life (which is reminiscent of the life of pleasure in the classical account of theory and practice) into the content of practice, and Dewey inserts production (which calls to mind the life of wealth in the classical account) into the content of practice. But it is the other way around as well. Dewey speaks of a union of practice and imagination and welcomes "poetry and religious feeling" as the "unforced flowers of life".[32] As the union of practice and imagination, art is that process through which the "meanings of objects that are otherwise dumb, inchoate, restricted, and resisted are clarified and concentrated, and not by thought working laboriously upon them, nor by escape into a world of mere sense, but by creation of a new experience".[33] The very sensuous perception of the work of art requires that the beholder "create his own experience".[34] In this way, Dewey also opts for a wider meaning of the sensuous life as the content of practice.

Likewise, Marx speaks of religious feeling as a "social product"[35], and speaks of the aesthetic sensibility in terms of man's "creating an *objective world* by his practical activity," that is, "*working up* inorganic nature", in such a way that he "proves himself a conscious species being" in being able to produce "even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom".[36] In this way, Marx also opts for a wider meaning of the life of production as the content of practice.

But if the wider meanings of the sensuous life and the life of production proposed by Marx and Dewey can be said to parallel respectively the classical notions of the voluptuous life and the life of wealth, it must be said that the sensuous life and the life of production have come to mean something different, something more, in Marx and Dewey, than the voluptuous life and the life of wealth in Aristotle and in the classical account of human life as a great civic festival.

For both Dewey and Marx, in other words, the sensuous activity of man and his productive activity are seen to be bound together as the unified content of practice, and it is this unified content - rather than any eternal and immutable, universal order of things existing by "nature" - which is held to constitute the material object to be comprehended by theory. Thus Marx observes that men

> begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual *material life* [emphasis added].[37]

The sensuous life of man and his production are thus reciprocal for Marx: man is the animal who produces his material life and whose production is his material life. There is no eternal and immutable order - no end-in-itself - outside of human practice which can serve as an object for theory. Dewey, too, remarks that if

> the notion of some objects as ends-in-themselves were abandoned, not merely in words but in all practical implications, human beings would for the first time in history be in a position to frame ends-in-view and form desires on the basis of empirically [*i.e.*, sensuously] grounded propositions of the temporal relations of [practical or productive] events to one another.[38]

Dewey, in fact, is against "the separation of means from ends", which is entailed by the orientation of theory away from practice and into an end in itself. He sees this separation as the "intellectual reflex of the divorce of theory and practice, intelligence and habit, foresight and present impulse".[39]

Put in another way, Marx and Dewey both claim that the production of commodities, in the sense of man's production of his own material life (Marx) or his own experience (Dewey), constitutes the very beginning of concept-formation, that is, of theory. The concept or theory, for both of them, is instrumental, that is, a tool with which to make distinctions. Thus for Marx, as long as man

> only transforms nature in order to consume it, his "annihilation" still moves at a level similar to that of animals. Only when he constructs a tool has he achieved an annihilation which does not annihilate itself as soon as it is carried out and therefore endlessly has to be repeated. ... Annihilation has become a lasting appropriation, for a tool is a piece of nature, which he has got under his control and now uses against nature.[40]

In producing and creating the tool, man preserves it for future use, so that along with the tool comes the "tool box", something with no analogate in other animals, and along with the preservation of the tool comes the concept, the theory, as the comprehension of the very practice implicit in the tool. In this is to be understood how "instrumentalism" could become the standard label for Dewey's

thought, a label which designates the "theory of those conditions in which reasoning occurs and of the forms, or controlling operations, that are characteristic in attaining and establishing future consequences".[41]

If theory is instrumental, a tool with which to make distinctions, for both Dewey and Marx, then these distinctions, in turn, can be focussed back on practice in order to alter or modify its content. But the modification of this practice is the transformation of human productions and sensuous activity which are reciprocal and particular. Man produces his material life or experience, and his production *is* his material life or experience in its particularity.

Only in their reciprocity and particularity can production and sensuous activity constitute an instance of universality. Thus, for Dewey, "being a telephone or a cutting tool is a self-identical universal", not in the sense of being eternal or "everlasting like an Aristotelian species, ... but in the sense that an operation as a relation which is grasped in thought is independent of the [particular] instances in which it is overtly exemplified, although its meaning is found only in the *possibility* of these [particular] actualizations".[42]

The artifact is thus a "universal" because it embodies a range of possible interventions in (and therewith constitutions of) experience. Only particular productive human experiences can constitute, for Dewey, instances of universality, which thought grasps as relations independent of the particulars, but the meaning of which can be nothing but these particulars. For Marx, too, the "same men who establish their [particular] social relations in conformity with their material productivity, produce also [universal] principles, ideas and categories, in conformity with their social relations. [But] these ideas, these categories, are as little eternal as the relations they express. They are *historical and transitory products*."[43]

There can no longer be, for Marx and Dewey, a mind-stuff or even an object of consciousness independent of human sensuous activity or experience and human production. Mind, theoretical activity, is what is at work, not in nature as a pre-given order of being, but in human subjectivity working itself out in sensuous and productive activity.

In this way, for Dewey and Marx, success in the modification of practice is what characterizes the true. As Dewey expresses it, the "temporal quality of inquiry" means something more than that "the process of inquiry takes time"; it means that the "objective subject-matter of inquiry undergoes temporal modification"[44], the "business" of which "is to determine that mode of operation which will resolve the predicament in which the agent finds himself involved".[45] For Marx, too, it is in the efficacy of "practice" that "man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power", the this-worldliness or "this-sided-ness [*Diesseitigkeit*] of his thinking".[46]

However, where human culture is, for Marx, the superstructure,

the epiphenomenon, of the more primal forces of history, it can be said that for Dewey, it is historical change which is the epiphenomenon of the more primal forces of "experience" or, as he later came to call it, "culture". While for Marx, the historical-materialistic dialectic involves constant negations and self-nullifications, Dewey's "instrumentalism" does not seem to afford any central role to negativity. In Dewey the dialectic of human experience or culture proceeds positively, very nearly organically - the purpose of life being precisely growth. Morality itself, for Dewey, means "growth of conduct in meaning; at least it means that kind of expansion in meaning which is consequent upon observations of the conditions and outcome of conduct. It is all one with growing."[47] The end of human life, for Dewey, "is no longer a terminus or limit to be reached. It is the active process of transforming the existent situation. Not perfection as a final goal, but the ever-enduring process of perfecting, maturing, refining is the aim in living ... . Growth itself is the only moral 'end'."[48]

But despite these differences, in regard to the ways in which the unity of theory and practice is to be realized, or is being realized, the end-result in Dewey and Marx is remarkably similar. Both have moved beyond Francis Bacon's manifesto - "Knowledge is Power" - to the proclamation that "Power is Knowledge". For Dewey "consciousness of meanings denotes *redirection* [emphasis added] of meanings (which are always ultimately meanings of events)"[49], and for Marx, it is the human power to develop "material production" and "material intercourse" which constitutes the object and the source of modification for men's "thinking and the products of their thinking".[50] It would seem that for man to know anything, according to Marx and Dewey, he must transform, make, or remake that thing.

The epistemological project for both Dewey and Marx is thus the uncovering of properly philosophical grounds for their contention that the purpose of theoretical consciousness is now, and must be, productive - the alteration of historical and social conditions, the melioration of "human nature" itself, which is held by both of them to be preeminently malleable. And this malleability is rooted in the radically particular presentation of that "human nature", its manifestation in absolutely unique human individuals. For there is and can be no universal order of things from which the individual "derives" his intelligibility - no meaningful totality of pregiven natural things with which the individual connects. Only individuals, for Marx and Dewey, are meaningful or can be meaningful, and it is because of this that the power of individuals constitutes knowledge, and the deprivation of power ignorance. Individuality, of course, for both Dewey and Marx, is something to be gained, to be wrought out in either material reality or experience. But Dewey has no qualms in admonishing us "to cultivate [our] own garden", although he insists that "our garden is the world, in

the angle at which it touches our own manner of being".[51] And in propounding a notion of theory which does not have its center of gravity in the Hegelian development of the "Idea" *or* in the classical notion of universality, Marx chooses to identify reason with the activity of the individual. "The life of individuals is reason because it is this life which explains and produces the formation of the family and of civil society."[52]

But is not Marx' "classless society" a throwback to a universal order, an absorption of the individual in a social whole? Perhaps the answer here is that Marxisms have been too readily confused with the thought of Marx. Perhaps the answer is that Marxisms, but not Marx, absorb the individual in a social totality. For the reading of Marx himself seems to confirm that he refuses "to define reality as general, that is to say, as transcending individual reality".[53] Particular existences, for Marx, do not "find beyond themselves, in a whole greater than themselves in which they would be integrated, in a world in which and of which they are held to live, their realization as a moment of the realization of this great Whole, as a moment of a reality that supersedes them. The beautiful ideal of the ancient city has seen its day."[54]

With the passing of the ideal of the ancient *polis*, there passes also the notion of human life as the great civic festival, with its understanding of the primacy of *theoria*, contemplation, disjoined from *praxis*, political action. *Praxis* and *theoria* are now a unity; the purpose of theory is now production, a production which belongs to the human individual in whose power alone knowledge can reside. In the place of the civic festival is the historical pilgrimage proposed by Marx and the cultural pilgrimage offered by Dewey. For Dewey there can be no "existence beyond the reach of experience" - the particular experiences of individuals - which would enable that experience to have for its ground "an ultimate being behind experience".[55] Theory cannot outreach practice in the cultural pilgrimage of individuals who are coming into what Dewey called their "integrated individuality".[56] Nor can theory outreach practice in the historical pilgrimage of individuals who are coming into what Marx saw as the actuality of economic and social structures, namely, "individual subjectivity".[57]

* * *

The replacement of the Pythagorean notion of human life as a civic festival by the notion of human life as a temporal pilgrimage is, then, intimately bound up with a new emphasis on the individual. As Dewey sees it, the

> ground of democratic ideas and practices is *faith* [emphasis added] in the potentialities of individuals, faith in the capacity for positive

> developments if proper conditions are provided. The weakness of the philosophy originally advanced to justify the democratic movement was that it took individuality to be something given ready-made; that is, in abstraction from time, instead of as a power to develop.[58]

But Dewey's use of the term "faith" here casts a shadow over both his own and Marx' confidence in purely philosophical grounds for their proposed unification of theory and practice. Whence the historical or cultural pilgrimage? From where the meaningfulness of the particular? What grounds the central significance of the human individual? And how do Marx and Dewey come by the notion of a world that exists in virtue, not of pre-given forms, but of the will? None of these questions, I submit, can be adequately answered by appealing to the deliberations of classical or ancient philosophy or to a purely philosophical account of being. Could it be that the answers to these questions inevitably require a theological input, some notion of a world that is created "ex nihilo" in every fiber of its being, and created in such a way that intelligibility resides only in the particular? Could it be that Dewey - emergent from his Puritan upbringing - and Marx - from his Jewish background - both share in a forgetfulness of this theological input, a forgetfulness generally characteristic of the modern world at this point in time?

The evidence for this forgetfulness is, of course, quite palpable in Marx, who advocates "a resolute positive transcendence [*Aufhebung*] of religion", ending "in the doctrine that man is the supreme being for man"[59], which is certainly not a pagan philosophical concept, and may not even be a purely rational possibility. But there is also evidence for this forgetfulness of a theological input into what Dewey calls "faith in the potentialities of individuals" to be found in Dewey himself who, having remarked that philosophy "does not create anything, but remakes what *seem* to be facts", that is, "remakes the facts *for us*", concluded that if "theology has the same method as philosophy, it is philosophy; if it does not have the same method, it has no relation to philosophy whatever".[60]

And yet, Dewey's observation notwithstanding, there is a decidedly theological input into the seriousness with which philosophical modernity tends to take such things as directional history, the particular, the unique human individual, and a world that exists in virtue of the will. And this theological input, I would suggest, finds its most salient expression in medieval nominalism, of which Dewey and Marx are descendants.

The medieval nominalists, let us not forget, were by and large theologians, living and breathing in a theological atmosphere, even if the ultimate consequence of their efforts was the destruction of theology

as a science, which, in turn, had the consequence of orienting philosophy "no longer toward theology" but to "the positive sciences and to the mathematical disciplines"[61] in the modern world. The most important of these nominalists is William of Ockham who readily displays his intellectual parentage of such thinkers as Hume, Marx, and Dewey, with their various modifications of what might be labeled a fundamentally "empiricist" orientation - an orientation into the particular. Ockham, it has been remarked, held that

> we cannot infer from experience to what transcends experience. We cannot infer anything concerning the nature of God from the order or existence of the world of nature known to us through our senses; nor can we infer anything about the human soul as an immaterial substance inhabiting the body - for we have no evidence that there is such a soul. Thus natural theology, and metaphysics in the sense of a science of suprasensory realms of being or of a priori factual truths, is quite fully repudiated by Ockham. Religion for him was [exclusively] a matter of faith; and theology, as a systematization of doctrines of faith, was treated as the syntactical development of a semantic system for which no empirical interpretation is available.[62]

But what impelled Ockham to these conclusions? The answer is precisely what he perceived as the implications of an essentially theological doctrine, namely, God's unqualified freedom in creating *ex nihilo*, the absence of any necessitation of God's Creation or even of the particular world that he created. For "if the world is out-and-out contingent, there can be no a priori reasons for its existence or for its de facto order; empiricism is thus a logical consequence of belief in the Christian doctrine of divine freedom [in Creation]".[63] In essence, Ockham and the medieval nominalists in general came to see that the contingent particulars of created nature were no imperfect embodiments of universal forms but the very repositories of intelligibility in that created nature. The free or voluntary activity of the Creator

> (*i.e.* that in his activity which exceeds determination by reason) terminates on the *contingent* being of the creature (*i.e.*, on that element of its being which eludes determination by form, namely its matter and the characteristics which it possesses *qua* material). If such voluntary activity is essential to God, it follows that the element of contingency is essential to what he creates. So soon as nature is conceived to be created by God, the contingent becomes more than an imperfection in the embodiment of form; it is precisely what constitutes a natural object more than an embodiment, namely a creature.[64]

The new status given particularity, then, in so-called modern empiricism (*e.g.*, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume) was a radical transformation due "primarily to the influence of the Christian religion, and to the work of the [nominalist] theologians of the Middle Ages".[65] By extension, it can be said that Marx' and Dewey's reworking of this modern empirical orientation into a unification of theory and practice is indebted to this theological tradition, however much they have forgotten it. The theological content of Creation *ex nihilo* - implicit in Judaism and explicit in Christianity - constitutes the unspoken "genetic heritage" for the unity of theory and practice proposed by Dewey and Marx.

What is now long since forgotten - since the time of Hegel, who, for a spell, nurtured the minds of the young Dewey and Marx - is that the voluntarist theology of Creation entails a notion of pilgrimage which leads to an "empty tomb".[66] The temporality of Creation has a direction, is going somewhere, and the residue of this Biblical notion of directional time is there for all to see in Marx and Dewey. What has been forgotten, however, is the promise of the departed God to come again at the end of the historical pilgrimage. Of course, this is no longer at issue in the world Dewey and Marx tried to understand - our world. For in this world, the dominant opinion, which both Marx and Dewey had the courage to confront and which they sought to understand in its deeper significance, is "that our happiness depends *entirely* [emphasis added] on external [empirical, particular] circumstances; nay, that the strength and dignity of the mind within us is itself the creature and consequence of these".[67] But the belief in the promise to bring the historical pilgrimage to its consummation, made by the departed God, even if he is what Nietzsche called "the ineluctable, poetic pretension"[68], was - and is still - a moment in the changeover from the ancient cyclical, civic festival to the modern progressive, historical pilgrimage. The Marxian and Deweyan unifications of theory and practice, in the end, are not positions that can justify themselves in purely philosophical or metaphysical terms.

NOTES

1. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations V*, 3, 8-9. See also Jamblichus, *Concerning the Life of Pythagoras*, 58-59, and Nicholas Lobkowicz, *Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1967, pp. 5-6.
2. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, 1095a, 15-30. See also Lobkowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.
3. Plato, *Apology*, 29.
4. Lobkowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
5. *Ibid.* p. 9.
6. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X, 1177b, 30ff
7. Plato, *Republic*, Book V, 473 c-d.
8. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book Lambda, 1072b, 15-31.
9. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI, 1141b, 2-8.
10. Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', XI, in K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin, *On Historical Materialism: A Collection*, New York, International Publishers, 1974, p. 13.
11. *Ibid.* VIII.
12. Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1968, p. 148.
13. Lobkowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-341.
14. John Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization,* New York, Minton, Balch & Company, 1931, p. 40.
15. John Dewey, 'The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy', in John Dewey, *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom: Representative Selections*, ed. Richard J. Bernstein, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, Library of Liberal Arts, 1960, p. 65.
16. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Enlarged Edition, Boston, Beacon Press, 1948, pp. 212-213.
17. G.W.F. Hegel, 'Letter to Niethammer, 28 Oct. 1808', cited by Shlomo Avineri, *op. cit.*, p. 138, note 2.
18. G.W.F. Hegel in his *Philosophy of History*, trans. John Sibree (New York, Collier and Son, 1902), pp. 494-495, remarks on the Crusades that "Christendom found the empty Sepulchre but not the union of the Secular and the Eternal; and so it lost the Holy Land. It was practically undeceived; and the result which is brought back with it was of a negative kind: viz. that the definite embodiment which it was seeking, was to be looked for in Subjective Consciousness alone, and in no external object; that the definite form in question, presenting the union of the Secular with the Eternal, is the Spiritual self-cognizant independence of the individual. This ... was the absolute result of the Crusades ... the West bade an eternal farewell to the East at the Holy

Sepulchre, and gained a comprehension of its own principle of subjective infinite Freedom. Christendom never appeared again on the scene of history as one body." In this way, "the principle of a specific and definite embodiment of the Infinite - that desideratum which urged the world to the Crusades, now developed itself in a quite different direction, viz. in secular existence asserting an independent ground: Spirit made its embodiment an outward one and found a congenial sphere in the secular life thus originated." (p. 512) Needless to say, neither Dewey nor Marx any longer talks this way. Hegel's intentions are essentially speculative, theoretical.

19. Stanley Rosen, *G.W.F. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1974, pp. 264-265.

20. Michel Henry, 'The Concept of Being as Production', *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* [New School for Social Research, New York, N.Y.], Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 21.

21. John Dewey, *Essays in Experimental Logic*, New York, Dover edition of first edition, University of Chicago, 1916, pp. 381-382.

22. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 113.

23. *Ibid.* p. 116.

24. *Ibid.* p. 23.

25. Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. Annette Jolin and Joseph O'Malley. Cambridge, At the University Press, 1970, p. 132.

26. *Ibid.* p. 137.

27. Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', I, in K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin, *On Historical Materialism: A Collection*, p. 11.

28. John Dewey, *Essays in Experimental Logic*, p. 442.

29. Michel Henry, *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1983, p. 188.

30. "Nicht das Bewusstsein bestimmt das Leben, sondern das Leben bestimmt das Bewusstsein", cited by Henry, *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*, p. 168. See Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, ch. 1, 4, in K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin, *On Historical Materialism: A Collection*, p. 23.

31. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, second edition, New York, Dover, 1958, pp. 378-379.

32. See note 16 above.

33. John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, New York, Capricorn Books, 1958, pp. 132-133.

34. *Ibid.* p. 54.

35. Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', VII, in K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin, *On Historical Materialism: A Collection*, p. 13.

36. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On Literature and Art*, A Selection of Writings edited by Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski, 'Documents on Marxist Aesthetics', Vol. I, New York, International General, 1973, p. 51.

37. Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, Ch. 1, 2, in K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin, *On Historical Materialism: A Collection*, p. 18.

38. John Dewey, *Theory of Valuation*, in *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, Vol. II, No. 4, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1939, p. 43.

39. John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*, New York, The Modern Library, 1930, p. 275.

40. Lobkowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

41. H.S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism*, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1968, p. 169.

42. John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action*, New York, Capricorn Books, 1960, p. 163.

43. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, in K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin, *On Historical Materialism: A Collection*, p. 77.

44. John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1938, p. 118.

45. *Ibid.* pp. 167-168.

46. Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', II, in K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin, *On Historical Materialism: A Collection*, p. 11.

47. John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 280.

48. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 177.

49. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 311.

50. Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, ch. 1, 4, in K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin, *On Historical Materialism: A Collection*, p. 23.

51. John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, New York, Capricorn Books, 1962, p. 171.

52. Michel Henry, *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*, p. 21.

53. *Ibid.* p. 99.

54. *Ibid.* p. 117.

55. John Dewey, 'Experience and Existence: A Comment', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. IX (1948-9), p. 709.

56. John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, p. 171.

57. Michel Henry, *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*, p. 105.

58. John Dewey, 'Time and Individuality', in John Dewey, *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom: Representative Selections*, ed. Richard J. Bernstein, p. 242.

59. Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. Annette Jolin and Joseph O'Malley, p. 137.

60. John Dewey, 'The Relation of Philosophy and Theology', Summary from notes taken at an address by John Dewey to the Ministerial Band, first published in the *Monthly Bulletin of the Students' Christian Association of the University of Michigan*, XVI (Jan. 1893), 66-68, reprinted in John Dewey: *The Early Works, 1882-1898*, General Editor, Jo Ann Boydston, Vol. 4, 1893-1894, *Early Essays and The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus*, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1975, pp. 365-366.

61. Ernest A. Moody, 'Empiricism and Metaphysics in Medieval Philosophy', *Philosophical Review*, Vol. LXVII (1958), pp. 160, 159.

62. *Ibid.* pp. 157-158.

63. *Ibid.* p. 158.

64. Michael B. Foster, 'The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Natural Science', *Mind*, n.s., Vol. XLIII (Oct. 1934), p. 464.

65. Ernest A. Moody, 'Empiricism and Metaphysics in Medieval Philosophy', p. 146.

66. See note 18 above. It should be clear by now that, although Marx and Dewey do not talk this way, that is, in the predominantly speculative or theoretical tone of Hegel, Hegel's remarks here account for the direction of thought taken by both Marx and Dewey.

67. Thomas Carlyle, 'Signs of the Times', [1829] in *A Carlyle Reader*, ed. G.B. Tennyson, New York, Modern Library, 1969, pp. 40-41.

68. Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Songs of Prince Vogelfrei', in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York, Vintage Books, Random House, 1974, p. 351.

JOHN RYDER

Naturalism, Dialectical Materialism, and an Ontology of Constitutive Relations

I

The thesis to be explored here is that the traditions of naturalism and dialectical materialism, extending from Dewey and Marx respectively - despite their many important dissimilarities - have at least this much in common: both philosophic views, at the level of ontological generality, require a concept of constitutive relations which sets them apart from most other traditional and contemporary philosophic schools. In itself there is nothing novel about this suggestion. Two of the most important recent and contemporary representatives of the American naturalist position, John H. Randall Jr. and Justus Buchler, have each made substantial contributions toward a theory of relations consonant with the general perspective of that school of thought.[1] While much less work of this kind has been done in the context of dialectical materialism, it has been suggested more than once that the tradition is in need of a more thorough-going concept of relations.[2] This need has arisen, for both schools of thought, as a result of the general concept of nature characteristic of each. While naturalism and dialectical materialism do not have identical conceptions of nature, each understands it in ways which render the more traditional Western ideas of substance, attributes and external relations insufficient.

Several preliminary problems confront a study like this, and we would do well to deal with them from the start. The first has to do with the metaphysical enterprise of ontological generalization. In his influential studies of "foundationalism" and pragmatism, Richard Rorty has argued that ontological generalization is not something philosophers should do since, he thinks, philosophers have no methods with which to examine "the world", or any part of it, without begging important questions.[3] Philosophy, in other words, cannot provide knowledge of the kind toward which the metaphysical enterprise aspires. In this respect, of course, Rorty's view is the latest in a long line of twentieth-century criticisms of philosophic generalization. Not all of the critics have had the same suggestions concerning what should replace 'inquiry'. Some would have us study logic, while others would have us study language. Rorty suggests that the philosopher's proper role is as a cultural and ideological gadfly, exposing the assumptions and biases of his time through "edifying" discourse.

I do not wish to suggest that these are inappropriate activities for

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philosophers to be engaged in. We are, or at least can be, well equipped to study logic and language, and to be cultural critics. Indeed, we should do these things. But the critics of traditional philosophy insist that one or another such enterprise be the sole philosophic activity. To abandon philosophic inquiry for one of these other pursuits would, however, be a grave mistake. In fact, I would go so far as to suggest that an adequate study of logic, language, culture or anything else is impossible without metaphysics. Metaphysics is understood here as the attempt to articulate an adequate set of general categories with respect to a given subject matter. In this sense there may be a metaphysics of language, of knowledge, of human 'being', of society, of art, of culture, of nature and of countless other subjects of inquiry. It is impossible to approach any subject matter with a *tabula rasa*, from outside any context, or from no initial point of view. In other words, we come to any subject of study with some more or less clearly defined set of basic and general concepts, and these "categories" influence our study in a host of ways. It is the province of metaphysical inquiry to examine these categories with respect both to their degree of internal consistency and the extent to which they adequately reflect the results of our empirical encounters with the subject at hand. Contrary to Rorty's suspicion, it is the rejection of a critical study of our general categories which is more likely to incline us to beg the crucial questions, and which threatens to make the character and results of our studies ebb and flow with the intellectual fashions of the day.

Imagine, for example, what it would be like to examine philosophically the problem of social freedom without a critical assessment of the relevant general concepts. To examine social freedom we must first delineate the subject of the study, that is, it is necessary to determine what we will regard as a society. We might call to mind the various ways we use the term "society". This would provide a point of departure, but we will not get very far without going on to consider at least some of the characteristics of societies. We will notice that societies invariably consist of some number of individuals in a relation of some kind to each other. We might then wonder what the relation is between any given individual and the society itself. Here, however, we run into trouble, since we are beginning to ask questions which require a critical investigation of the most general categories of "the social". What are the general features of social relations? What is the nature of an individual in a relation of this kind? Does the individual constitute society, or do societies constitute individuals, or both? In which respects, and to what extent? To study the question of social freedom at all we must either assume answers to these questions, or we will take seriously the enterprise of critically examining them. We would find, in fact, that the very same questions would confront us when we begin to consider the concept of freedom. The way we understand individuals

and the social relations they stand in will significantly influence the concept of freedom we employ. If we are inclined to take social relations as external properties of individuals, then it is tempting to understand individual freedom as the absence of constraints imposed by others, or, in a related sense, as a condition characterized by a minimum of overt, external social relations. On the other hand, if we take relations as constitutive not only of societies but of individuals as well, then freedom assumes a different meaning. It requires not fewer external relations, but rather a careful understanding of whatever social relations there are, or should be, in order to be able to work within those contexts for the ends we deem appropriate. Indeed, the character of the ends themselves will be influenced by our categories. Without a critical study of such general categories as "the social", relation, and individual, our examination of the problem of social freedom is doomed from the start.

If this general conception of metaphysics is an adequate one, then it is safe to say that any well developed set of philosophic views - and those of Dewey and Marx are certainly well developed - must reflect some categorial schema, and this would be true regardless of whether the philosopher in question explicitly articulated it. To explore the concept of relations in Dewey's naturalism and Marx' materialism is to identify one aspect of their respective categorial systems.

To associate Marx with metaphysics may strike some as a bit perverse, if not an outright absurdity. Not only did Marx contrast his own views with the "metaphysical" views of many other philosophers and social thinkers, he also explicitly rejected much of the traditional philosophy which attempted merely "to interpret the world". Adequate philosophy, Marx insisted, must not only interpret the world, but change it. While these sorts of considerations may appear to be a rejection of metaphysics, it is "metaphysics" in a different sense. When Marx and Engels contrasted their worldview with that of the "metaphysical materialists", for example, the criticism was aimed not at the fact that older materialism was a general worldview, but at the specific content of earlier materialist philosophy. Earlier materialism, for Marx, was metaphysical in two senses. The first is that it was not dialectical, and the second was that in the end it could maintain itself in the face of contrary evidence only by imposing its categories on the world provided in empirical evidence. Nor was Marx opposed to theory in general. He opposed not theory, or abstraction, but theory and abstraction for their own sake, devoid of practical consequences. As the critical evaluation of general concepts, of categories, metaphysics is no less appropriate to Marx' world view than to any other. Marx worked with a specific theory of the world, one which is characterized, as are all others, by specific principles and categories, and these general components of his theory are at work in his various

inquiries in history, politics, sociology and political economy. The precise nature of his general theory, however, has been a matter of some controversy, especially among Western commentators, and it raises the next preliminary problem which must be considered.

I have already once referred to Marx in connection with Engels, and have obliquely referred to him as an advocate of both materialism and dialectics. It is clear, then, that I understand Marx' general world view to be that of dialectical materialism. There are a number of commentators, however, who are inclined to disassociate Marx from Engels and the whole dialectical-materialist tradition which passed from Engels through Lenin on to the present day. One author, for example, studies Marx without the principles of dialectical materialism explicitly developed by Engels, saying, for one thing, that Marx never used the term "dialectical materialism", and for another, that Marx can be better understood by abandoning the traditional categories of materialist dialectics.[4] In a somewhat different vein, another author has recently argued that Engels' use of the "laws of dialectic" plays a relatively superficial role in his general conceptual schema.[5] It seems to me, however, that we have better reason to regard both Marx and Engels as serious advocates, indeed the founders, of dialectical materialism. The classic statements of the general outline of that position are Engels', and we have no reason to assume that his explication of the laws of dialectics and exposition of the materialist standpoint were not meant precisely as he presents them. There is nothing in *Anti-Dühring*, the *Dialectics of Nature*, or in *Ludwig Feuerbach* to suggest that the principles of dialectical materialism were mere expediencies for some extrinsic purpose. As for Marx himself, though he never developed an explicit statement of dialectical materialism, there are nevertheless several indications that it was a view with which he identified.

First, Engels worked closely with Marx during his preparation of *Anti-Dühring*, and he mentions in the 'Preface' to the second edition that he "read the whole manuscript to him (Marx)" and that Marx himself wrote Chapter X of Part II of the work.[6] One would expect that if Marx had serious reservations about the position the book developed he would have said so, but there are no indications in letters or elsewhere that Marx made any such objections.

Second, while the outlines of dialectical materialism were developed and applied by Marx and Engels, the same general position was arrived at independently by the German worker Joseph Dietzgen, with whom Marx and Engels worked closely. Marx also expressed his general agreement with Dietzgen in a letter to Kugelmann, to which Lenin refers in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.*[7] And we should remember Marx' general enthusiasm over Feuerbach's materialism, and that Marx' objection to Feuerbach was that he was not able to advance the materialist position beyond the confines of its earlier, "meta-

physical" formulations.[8]

Third, it is sometimes claimed that while Marx did employ the dialectical method in his historical materialism, he never intended the general principles to be extended beyond the arena of human interaction. But if this were true, it would be difficult to understand why Marx was so impressed with Darwin's work.[9] What would make *The Origin of Species* so attractive to Marx is its discovery in the biological realm of the significance of process, change and struggle, which are also among the dialectical-materialist, natural categories. There is better reason, then, to understand Marx as interested in the implications of his general ideas in the study of natural processes. Finally, the most compelling reason to regard Marx as a dialectical materialist is the fact that his studies in history, political economy and social interaction generally embody, indeed require, dialectical-materialist principles. This is a claim which needs to be developed in much greater detail, and I will attempt to do so below, but I would say at this point that Marx' historical materialism is inconsistent with any set of ontological categories which are not both dialectical and materialist.[10]

The final preliminary point concerns the fact that, to discuss adequately questions of ontological categories in the work of Marx and Dewey, it is necessary to look beyond their work to the respective traditions with which they are identified. The necessity is due to the fact that neither Marx nor Dewey explicitly developed a general categorial schema, though Dewey came much closer than Marx. Thus it is sometimes necessary to look at the fruits of their work to determine what seeds they contained. On the other hand, this is a procedure fraught with peril, since any organism is capable of producing mutations. Not every self-styled naturalist works in the Deweyian vein, and not every self-proclaimed Marxist is inclined to accept the general outlines of Marx' world view. The methodological requirement, then, is twofold. While it is both necessary and appropriate to turn to the collaborators and successors, in particular Engels and Lenin in Marx' case and Randall and Buchler in Dewey's, it is also necessary to study the original works themselves to tease from them the appropriate philosophic implications.

II

It was suggested earlier that an ontology of constitutive relations is a component of the general conceptions of nature which characterize naturalism and dialectical materialism. This is true in two respects, one which involves a conception of nature as exhaustive of what is, which is to say that there is nothing which is not continuous with something else, or to put it another way, there is nothing which is radically

different from everything else. The second relevant feature of nature as understood by both traditions is an opposition to an ontology of substance, *i.e.*, of ontological simples. We will discuss these two aspects of nature in turn.

It has become commonplace to say of Dewey that throughout his philosophic work he struggled to overcome the many "dualisms" and dichotomies which have characterized so much of the history of philosophy. Traditional contrasts between mind and matter, and between theory and practice, to mention just two, were perennial targets of Dewey's attack. In addition to these, he was determined to show that it was neither necessary nor advisable to insist on a distinction between the natural world and some contrast such as a "human" or a "divine" world. If Dewey's naturalism means anything at all, it is that there is nothing whatever which cannot be understood as an aspect of natural, knowable processes and relations. It has often been claimed that if human beings are not in some way or other radically different from natural phenomena, then all the aspirations, ends and moral principles of human life are illusory. Dewey resisted this move and argued persistently that human ends and principles are products of our experience generally, and of our successes and failures in particular. In a similar vein, it has been argued by representatives of various religious traditions that the world in general and human life in particular are inexplicable and essentially meaningless without a supernatural order to provide both moral and ontological support. Again, Dewey attacked this view throughout his career, arguing that the study of natural phenomena provides the principles necessary to understand them and that the meaning and value of events is to be understood in their relations to other events. In *A Common Faith*, for example, he attempts to show that far from being an explanation of anything, the notion of God is rather an idealized collection of the ends and values conspicuous in their absence from the range of daily human affairs.[11] Omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence are, he argues, the limiting concepts of the knowledge, power, and love for which we strive in order to improve our lives. The supernatural world of the philosophers fared no better than that of the theologians. Whether it is Plato's Forms or Hegel's Absolute Spirit, Dewey insisted that no such entities are necessary to account for the natural world. Whatever is, then, was for Dewey continuous with the rest of the phenomena of "the world", and there is nothing more or less natural than anything else.

One of the implications of such a view is that nature is infinite. If nature were finite, if it were a delimitable whole, then a "non-natural" of some kind would follow. This is not to say that any particular phenomenon, event or process of nature is infinite, but only that the term "nature" does not denote a 'particular' of any kind. Nature is, for Dewey and the naturalist tradition, whatever is.

Compare this conception of nature with the view expressed by the spokespersons of dialectical materialism, especially Engels and Lenin. To clarify this view, though, a word must first be said about the way they tend to use the term "nature". Engels begins *Ludwig Feuerbach* by suggesting that the "great basic question of all philosophy ... is that concerning the relation of thinking and being", and that the "answers which philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps". The camps, of course, are idealism and materialism. Engels defines idealists as "those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature", and materialists as those "who regarded nature as primary".[12] To describe nature as "primary" is to contrast it with whatever is not primary, and seems to be a different use of the term than we find in Dewey and the naturalists. Engels in fact contrasts it to "spirit", or "mind", in order to clarify the distinction between the two perennial philosophic camps. The idealist holds that nature is the product of "spirit", in the case of objective idealism, or "mind", in the case of subjective idealism. The materialist, on the other hand, rejects the view that "spirit" is something necessary to account for the world, and understands "mind" as a product, or function, of nature. Thus the materialist, as Engels describes him, bears more relation to the naturalist than would at first seem likely. The materialist, like the naturalist, rejects a supernatural "spirit", "Idea", or "god", and also insists that "mind" is not an entity, or substance, radically distinct from nature, or matter, but is rather a complex functioning of natural processes.

Nonetheless, despite the fact that the content of the dialectical-materialist conception of nature is much like that of the naturalists, the language used to express it gives the impression that mind, since it is secondary to nature, is therefore not a "natural" phenomenon. The problem, however, appears to be due more to an inexactness of categorial formulation than to the content of the concept itself. Several pages into the same book, Engels describes Feuerbach's gradual development away from Hegelian idealism toward "pure materialism," *i.e.*, the view "that the material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality, and that our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain".[13] Here Engels makes it quite clear that the world "to which we ourselves belong" is the natural world, that the natural world is exhaustive of what is, and that the fact of human consciousness and thought is to be understood as a process, not only continuous with but dependent on natural phenomena. It must be noticed, however, that in this passage Engels does not use the term "nature", but refers rather to the material world. Engels in fact uses the terms interchangeably, and it is instructive to see how the concept of matter has been understood in the dialectical-materialist tradition.

In the passages we have so far seen, Engels is referring to

materialism generically, whether dialectical or more in the spirit of earlier versions of the tradition. He goes on to take Feuerbach to task for not fully endorsing a materialist view, though he points out that Feuerbach's reluctance to accept a full-blown materialism was due to his inability to distinguish materialism in general from the specific versions of it characteristic of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Feuerbach rejected, and rightly so on Engels' view, the mechanical, "metaphysical" materialism of the English, the French and the Americans, but he failed to see the possibility of a more adequate materialism not limited by eighteenth-century mechanics and the necessarily ahistorical conception of natural events and matter inherent in it. The task of pushing the general materialist standpoint to new and higher levels, Engels tells us, fell primarily to Marx, and then to himself, Dietzgen and others.

It was Lenin, in fact, who offered the most explicit account of what the term "matter" means for dialectical materialism. While the term "matter" meant to all earlier materialism a specific view of the constitution of natural phenomena, *i.e.*, that it was reducible to simple elements, atoms, in various relations and modes of interaction with each other, Lenin tells us that "the sole 'property' of matter with whose recognition philosophical materialism is bound up is the property of being an objective reality, of existing outside our mind".[14] To discuss the material world in the most general use of the term, then, is simply to discuss nature, "to which we ourselves belong", to restate Engels' reminder, as that which exists objectively. Lenin makes this point in the context of an extended critique of empirio-criticism, which at the turn of the century was being expounded throughout Europe as the point of view most consistent with recent developments in physics. Lenin's remarks are helpful in illustrating the dialectical-materialist point of view. It was being argued by critics of materialism that research in physics was making it clear that the "matter" which materialism had posited did not exist. The simple, immutable substances of traditional atomism turned out not to be simple at all, but were capable of analysis into still smaller constitutive units. And, it was pointed out, there was every reason to believe that the new elements were not simple either.

In an inference reminiscent of Leibniz' concept of monads, it was suggested that physical entities could not possibly be simple since by definition they occupied space and whatever occupies space can occupy less space. Thus whatever "underlay" the physical world could not be material substance. Matter, it was claimed, had disappeared.

Lenin is quick to point out that these critics of materialism, like Feuerbach before them, make the mistake of confusing materialism generally with a specific, atomistic version of it:

> The error of Machism in general, as of the Machian new physics,

> is that it ignores the basis of philosophical materialism and the distinction between metaphysical materialism and dialectical materialism. The recognition of immutable elements, "of the immutable substance of things," and so forth, is not materialism, but metaphysical, *i.e.* anti-dialectical, materialism.[15]

Physics, Lenin is arguing, refutes the atomism of earlier materialism, and with it the general idea of immutable substance. Not only does it not refute materialism generally, it actually presupposes the existence of matter, which Lenin says again "implies nothing but objective reality".[16] Furthermore, he suggests, physics corroborates dialectical materialism in that it portrays a world constituted not by ahistorical, immutable substances and simples in external relation to one another, but rather by a world constituted by process, change and relations. The concept of nature, or matter, explicitly developed by Engels and Lenin is much like that of Dewey and the naturalists. Both reject a view of nature as contrasted with a supernatural, objective ideal realm or with a parallel world of "mind". We have also seen that one of the implications of Dewey's view is that nature is infinite in that it includes whatever exists. On this point Lenin is in complete agreement. He approvingly cites Dietzgen, who argued that the "subject-matter of science is endless", and that "nature in all her parts has no beginning and no end".[17] In Lenin's own words, "nature is infinite, but it infinitely exists".[18] As for the naturalists, the terms "nature" and "matter" do not denote anything in particular, either indefinitely small or indefinitely large. This is in part because both views of nature reject the existence of both a "smallest" and a "largest". This is why Engels remarks that "As soon as each special science is bound to make clear its position in the great totality of things and of our knowledge of things, a special science dealing with this totality is superfluous (or unnecessary)."[19] There is no need of a grand "metaphysical" construction of the "world" in part because there is no "world", or whole, or totality about which to speculate. There is, however, nature, and nature is available for inquiry, in particular by the various sciences and in general by philosophy. It is interesting, also, to point out that much of this is reminiscent of Buchler's recent work. While he argues for, and exhibits, the significance of philosophic generalization, he explicitly rejects the possibility of a "totality" about which to generalize. The "World," he argues, is but the "availability of complexes", while "Nature" is to be understood as "providingness".[20]

There are those who may be concerned about this comparison between Dewey and materialists, since Dewey was not especially inclined to describe his own views in this way.[21] Furthermore, the pragmatist tradition in which Dewey stands was in some ways inclined to resolve the classic dualism of mind and matter by describing each as

an expression of something more fundamental. James is the obvious example here, in that for him the material and the ideal are to be understood as "cross sections" of pure experience.[22] Dewey's conception of experience is not the same as James', but given his emphasis on that concept, we might be reluctant to read him as embracing materialism of any kind.

The publication of *Naturalism and the Human Spirit* spawned, among other things, an article by W.H. Sheldon, in which he "accused" the naturalists of being materialists. Dewey, Sidney Hook and Ernest Nagel responded in an article titled 'Are Naturalists Materialists?'[23] They suggest that the answer to the question depends on what the term "materialism" means. If materialism means, they say, the rejection of mental substance, then yes, naturalists are materialists. If, however, materialism is necessarily reductive, which is to say if it means that allegedly mental states are in fact physical ones, and that mental language is equivalent in meaning to physical language, then naturalists are not materialists. Finally, if materialism means that mental events are contingent upon physical events and structures, then naturalists would consider themselves materialists. It is important to notice that of the three senses of materialism mentioned, the only one the authors reject is reductive materialism. It should also be noted that in this sense, Marx, Engels and Lenin would also reject materialism. Reductive materialism is characteristic of pre-dialectical versions of materialism, and has never been a characteristic of materialism in its dialectical form. A contemporary dialectical materialist, for example, describes the reductive view, and goes on to comment that "This usage, which was characteristic of the early, naive form of materialism cannot, of course, be used by the materialism of today, which takes into consideration all the complexity of the relationships between individual mental activity and the 'world of things'."[24] Furthermore, not only do Dewey, Hook and Nagel reject the same version of materialism which Marx *et al.* rejected, but they endorse what the latter endorse. Both reject mental substance, and both accept the view, to use Engels' term, that nature is "primary". If "materialism" signifies this view, as the naturalists put it, then "Mr. Sheldon is not mistaken in his accusation of naturalists as materialists."[25]

There are also other writings in which Dewey develops a similar conception of the "material", of nature generally, and of the character of a general metaphysical inquiry into nature. In the spirit of Engels' point that any specific question concerning nature is the province of one or another of the special sciences, Dewey remarks that "Any intelligible question as to causation seems to be a wholly scientific question." Since this is the case, he goes on to suggest, "it may be said that a question about ultimate origins or ultimate causation is either a meaningless question, or else the words are used in a relative sense to

designate the point in the past at which a particular inquiry breaks off". We might, he says, inquire into the "'ultimate' origin of the French language", but we cannot intelligibly inquire into the ultimate origin of existence in general. Thus a special study of a "whole", as Engels puts it, is impossible. Nonetheless, Dewey argues, it is both possible and fruitful to inquire into any "ultimate ... traits of the very existences with which scientific reflection is concerned".[26] At this point he mentions two such traits, interaction and change, both of which also figure prominently as general categories of dialectical materialism.

In 'Nature in Experience' Dewey explicitly expresses a conception of matter consonant in several respects with the dialectical materialists' view:

> The view I have put forward about the nature of that to which the adjective 'physical' applies is that, while it is arrived at by following out clews given in directly experimental matter, it constitutes the conditions upon which all the qualities and terminal values, the consummations, of experience, depend.[27]

Thus the distinctive characteristics of life in general, and of human life and experience in particular, are "conditioned" by the material, objective world available for scientific inquiry. Dewey makes a similar point in connection with a discussion of the general significance of evolution:

> Without a doctrine of evolution we might be able to say, not that matter caused life, but that matter under certain conditions of highly complicated and intensified interaction is living. With the doctrine of evolution, we can add to this statement that the interactions and changes of matter are themselves of a kind to bring about that complex and intensified interaction which is life.[28]

There are several instructive points in these remarks. The first is that the material world is such that it generates complex, living processes. Dewey emphasizes this when he remarks that

> It is as much a part of the real being of atoms that they give rise in time, under increasing complications of relationships to qualities of blue and sweet, pain and beauty, as that they have, at a certain cross-section of time, extension, mass or weight.[29]

He cautions in a footnote to this passage that

> "giving rise to" implies no particular theory as to causal determination, and the word 'atom' is used illustratively. The point

> made would be the same if at some time in the future natural science abandoned the atomic theory and put something else in the place of atoms.

Thus, without committing himself to any particular view of the physical details of the constitution of matter, Dewey emphasizes both its "primacy" and its inherent activity as evidenced by evolution. The activity of matter is a second important point to emphasize here, since the rejection of matter as passive is in part what distinguishes both Dewey's naturalism and dialectical materialism from earlier, mechanical materialism, in which matter was regarded as essentially inert and passive.

The rejection of mechanistic materialism is explicit in Dewey's work. One of the characteristics of that view, as we have already seen, is that any phenomena of nature can be reduced to material terms. While Dewey insists that our knowledge of nature is "dependent upon the conclusions of the natural sciences", he is careful to clarify what this dependence is. What he means by "dependent", he says, is "that the intellectual instrumentalities, the organs, for understanding the new and distinctive material of experienced objects are provided by the natural sciences." Dewey continues by explaining what this dependence does not mean:

> I do not mean that the material of experienced things qua experienced must be translated into the terms of the material of the physical sciences; that view leads to a naturalism which denies distinctive significance to experience, thereby ending in the identification of naturalism with mechanistic materialism.[30]

A final general point to be made about Dewey's conception of nature concerns his view of the relation between nature and experience, a view which further exemplifies his general conception of the continuity of all natural phenomena. Dewey was convinced that the general characteristics of experience, of the world as experienced, are illustrative of the characteristics of nature in general. He writes, for example, that the "domination of man by desire and reverie is as pertinent to a philosophical theory of nature as is mathematical physics". He goes on to clarify this statement as follows:

> For the whole point of the passage is that qualities of experienced things that are not the least bit illuminating for the understanding of nature in physical science are as important for a philosophy of nature as the thing most illuminating, namely mathematical physics - a view, as I have said, which any theory making experience continuous with nature is bound to hold.[31]

Such a view of the continuity of nature and experience is susceptible to at least two different interpretations. It is possible to conclude from these remarks that since the characteristics of experience are important for a general theory of nature, it must be that nature acquires its features by virtue of being experienced. Such an idealist interpretation, however, is decidedly Kantian and is flatly contradicted by the materialist assertions already cited. It is far more consistent with Dewey's other points to conclude that the distinctive characteristics of experience are at least relevant to a careful understanding of nature not because nature "for us" is a result of experience but because experience is itself a natural phenomenon and as such shares the most generic traits of all natural events. Any other conclusion, one might say, would be to drive an ontological wedge between human life and the objective world, a wedge Dewey constantly struggled against.

It would be fruitful at this point to review the analysis as so far developed. It has been claimed that certain general features of a concept of nature shared by naturalism and dialectical materialism require an ontology of constitutive relations. Specifically, both traditions hold that there is nothing "non-natural" or "supernatural" with which to contrast nature, that all natural phenomena are ontologically continuous with at least some other phenomena of nature, and finally that natural phenomena exist objectively. An adequate set of ontological categories must be able to account for these general features of nature. Thus any sort of idealist absolutism or monism is unacceptable, as is a dualistic conception of mental and material substance. The objectivity of nature belies subjective idealism, its inexhaustiveness belies objective idealism, and the continuity of natural phenomena renders impossible any conception of immutable substance. An adequate ontology, then, requires that we be able to understand any and all natural phenomena as constituted by a matrix of relations which are not external to the terms related, but constitutive of them.

III

We have alluded only briefly to the question of substance and ontological simples, focussing instead on natural phenomena as continuous and objective. It is possible now to turn more directly to the problem of the constitution of natural events. In general, it will be argued that the methods of analysis found in the works of both Dewey and Marx indicate the impossibility of an ontology of simple substance, and that the traditional philosophic distinction between substance and attributes is inconsistent with the view of natural phenomena expressed by Dewey and Marx.

Dewey has indicated his rejection of ontological simples directly in passages such as this:

> Some contemporary metaphysical theories attempt to start from pure "simple" entities and then refer change exclusively to "complexes." This overlooks the fact that without internal diversification in the alleged simple entity, a complex entity would no more exhibit change than a simple one. The history of the doctrine of atoms is instructive. Such a metaphysics transgresses the conditions of intelligent inquiry in exactly the same way as the metaphysics of ultimate origins.[32]

The long-standing metaphysical inclination to posit ontological simples is inappropriate, Dewey suggests, because at the very least such an obvious characteristic of the world as change is impossible to understand if natural phenomena are essentially immutable substances. The phenomena of nature must be "essentially" complex. Thus we can say that while the traditional inference that if there are complexes there must be simples is an "egregious non sequitur", as Buchler puts it, it is nonetheless appropriate to infer the reality of complexes from the impossibility of simples.

Dewey's endorsement, or at least assumption, of an ontology of complexes is further underscored by the general features of his method of philosophic analysis. Of particular importance is his concept of the "situation", and the implications of his view of inquiry and knowledge. We take our cue in part from Randall's claim that "Dewey's term for *ousia* or Substance...is clearly 'the Situation'..."[33] Whether Randall's Aristotelian development of these concepts is an adequate one is open to question, but it is reasonable to follow him in regarding "the situation" as having meaning for a "philosophy of being", which is to say as having ontological significance.

Dewey employs the concept of "the situation" as a necessary feature of an adequate theory of inquiry. We must realize, he says, that "we never experience nor form judgments about objects and events in isolation, but only in connection with a contextual whole". He goes on to say that "In actual experience, there is never any such isolated singular object or event; an object or event is always a special part, phase, or aspect, of an environing experienced world--a situation."[34] Given such a view, a strictly analytic conception of inquiry is bound to be inadequate since by its nature it removes a given object or event from its "contextual whole" for the purpose of analysis. But to study an object or event by removing it from its relations, from its context, is to alter the subject of the inquiry. In other words, a given object or event is what it is, and has whatever traits and characteristics that it does, by virtue of its place in a contextual whole, of its relations with other

constituents of the "context".

The way Dewey uses "the situation" in his discussions of inquiry, knowledge and meaning illustrates his explicit rejection of ontological simples. Inquiry, he argues, is a complex process which invariably involves an "indeterminate situation" and an "end in view" which would count as a resolution of the problem. Inquiry cannot be a process of conceptual analysis, but rather must reflect the complexity of the situation which gives rise to it. In a similar way, his understanding of knowledge, derived from an interactionist view of experience, reflects a general tendency to avoid atomistic assumptions and their implications. Dewey suggests the complex nature of knowledge itself by pointing out that actual experience is such that the constituents of it affect each other in more or less significant ways. "In the first place", he says, "the interaction of organism and environment, resulting in some adaptation which secures utilization of the latter, is the primary fact, the basic category." He goes on to say that "Knowledge is not something self-sufficing, but is involved in the process by which life is sustained and evolved."[35] Thus the complex interactions which constitute life, and the reflection and manipulation of those interactions which are what Dewey calls knowledge and inquiry, cannot be understood apart from each other. To drive the point home a bit further, it is worth pointing out that Dewey understands meaning, of various sorts, in much the same way. Referring to linguistic meaning, for example, he says that "Discourse that is not controlled by reference to a situation is not discourse, but a meaningless jumble; just as a mass of pied type is not a font much less a sentence."[36] Discourse, or meaningful linguistic activity, is what it is by virtue of its "reference", its relation, to a context or situation of which it is a part. Discourse is not reducible to simple constituents, but resides, so to speak, in a set of relations which render it discourse and not meaningless sounds or symbols.

A critical comment may be in order here. I have been attempting to illustrate what I mean by the expression "constitutive relations" in an admittedly round-about way, by drawing it out from various remarks and philosophic points Dewey has made. One of the reasons for the somewhat circuitous procedure is that Dewey himself never developed these points in a systematic and thorough way. One has to show, rather, that Dewey's discussions of other issues exhibit this particular ontological point of view. Even in *Experience and Nature* he does not pay explicit attention to the many ontological questions which arise from his own rejection of substance, atomism and ontological simples. In my own view, the best work to date on these questions can be found in Buchler's metaphysical works. In any case, I wish to suggest that whatever their merits or shortcomings, Dewey's accounts of inquiry, knowledge, meaning, and in fact a host of other philosophic issues, indicate an inclination to understand the phenomena of nature, human

and otherwise, as complex and relational rather than atomistic. And this is a much stronger claim than to say simply that natural objects and events stand in relation to one another. No one would deny that, except perhaps Leibniz in his more peculiar moments. It is a stronger claim in that the proposed relational view does not imply merely external relations, but rather constitutive ones. In fact, as Buchler has pointed out, to talk about natural phenomena as inherently complex is to erase the distinction between internal and external relations. If the phenomena of nature are relationally constituted, then the relations are to be distinguished by their degree of relevance, not by being internal or external. The latter categories are in fact meaningless on the view suggested here.[37]

When we turn to dialectical materialism, we find a similar position expressed explicitly by Lenin and Engels and implicit in Marx' work. We have already referred to Lenin's point that an adherence to "the immutable substance of things" is not materialism, but rather, he says, "metaphysical, *i.e.* anti-dialectical materialism." We have also referred to his appeal to Dietzgen's point that the "subject-matter of science is endless". Lenin goes on in the same passage to say that "not only the infinite, but the 'smallest atom' is immeasurable, unknowable to the end, inexhaustible", since the infinity of nature implies both its boundlessness and the impossibility of its reduction to simple constituents.[38] As Lenin's association of atomism with "metaphysical" materialism suggests, "modern" materialism is dialectical precisely in that it endorses an ontology of complexity, *i.e.*, of constitutive relations. To say that nature is dialectical in character, as Engels and Lenin most explicitly do, is to say that natural phenomena are not reducible to immutable simples. The processes of nature can only be understood as interactions of natural phenomena in some set of determinate relations to one another. This is also why inquiry itself must be dialectical; only then are we capable of understanding our subject matter as the relational phenomenon it is. The relation between ontology and inquiry in this respect has much in common with Dewey's position.

Engels devotes several of his later works to showing that nature in all its forms is dialectical in structure. In *Ludwig Feuerbach*, for example, he describes the dialectical position as "The great basic thought that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable ... go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away ..." The importance of the dialectical perspective for natural science and philosophy is expressed in the following passage:

> The old metaphysics which accepted things as finished objects arose from a natural science which investigated dead and living

> things as finished objects. But when this investigation had progressed so far that it became possible to take the decisive step forward of transition to the systematic investigation of the changes which these things undergo in nature itself, then the last hour of the old metaphysics sounded in the realm of philosophy also. And in fact, while natural science up to the end of the last century was predominantly a collecting science, a science of finished things, in our century it is essentially a classifying science, a science of the processes, of the origin and development of these things and of the inter-connection which binds all these natural processes into one great whole.[39]

To adopt the dialectical position was, for Engels, to recognize that natural phenomena are on-going processes of interaction and change, not essentially immutable.

Engels' laws of dialectics are intended to be a more precise and detailed expression of the same point. These laws, he says, are abstracted "from the history of nature and human society", and they are, he continues, "nothing but the most general laws of these two aspects of historical development, as well as thought itself".[40] When Engels discusses the transformation of quantity into quality, the inter-penetration of opposites, and the negation of the negation, he is attempting to articulate in general terms the ways in which change occurs and processes develop. Without belaboring the details of Engels' laws, it is clear that they attempt to describe a world devoid of immutable constituents. In his *Philosophical Notebooks* Lenin makes the same point more explicitly. In notes on Hegel's *Logic* he suggests several elements of dialectics, among which are the "objectivity of consideration" and "the entire totality of the manifold relations of this thing to others".[41] Lenin says clearly that to reject simple substance was to require an understanding of the phenomena of nature in terms of their respective "manifold of relations".

I have suggested that in addition to these explicit ontological assertions, one can find expressed in Marx' discussions of various problems the same fundamental conceptions. In *The Holy Family*, the same work in which Marx and Engels trace the development of philosophic materialism and suggest that even pre-dialectical materialism is the foundation of humanism and early pre-Marxist Communism, Marx makes it clear that it is a mistake to understand individuals as atomic entities in external relation to one another:

> ... the members of civil society are not atoms. The specific property of the atom is that it has no properties and is therefore not connected with beings outside it by any relations determined by its own natural necessity. The atom has no needs, it is self-sufficient;

> the world outside it is an absolute vacuum, *i.e.* it is contentless, senseless, meaningless, just because the atom has all its fullness in itself. The egoistic individual in civil society may in his non-sensuous imagination and lifeless abstraction inflate himself to the size of an atom, *i.e.* to an unrelated, self-sufficient, wantless, absolutely full, blessed being. Unblessed sensuous reality does not bother about his imagination; each of the senses compels him to believe in the existence of the world and the individuals outside him, and even his profane stomach reminds him every day that the world outside him is not empty, but is what really fills.[42]

Marx' point, of course, is not merely that there is an objective world and that man does not live by thought or will alone, but that man's very existence is a relational phenomenon rather than one which is characterized by a self-sufficient, "essential" nature. What human beings are, what we do, will, think, desire, *etc.*, is a function of the complex set of conditions, the "situation", in which we find ourselves. And for Marx, the most significant, the most fundamental, aspect of that set of conditions is the fact that we are material beings who exist in relation to the rest of nature and must meet our needs within the natural limits in which we find ourselves. This is the heart of Marx' historical materialism. His life-long attempt to understand the processes of human history invariably exhibits the fundamental point that human behavior, human "nature," can never be abstracted from its material conditions, nor can it be absolutized into something timeless and immutable.

Marx' view of the human situation as a relational phenomenon is illustrated graphically in his concepts of class and class struggle. History, he argued, is a process of the resolution of class conflicts, and historical change is the result of subservient classes overthrowing antagonistic ruling classes. But Marx' materialist analysis of history is impossible to understand unless one deals carefully with the concept of "class" itself. For Marx, an antagonistic conflict between two economic classes is not analogous to two distinct entities on a collision course. The situation is complicated by the fact that the material conditions which generate antagonistic classes are such that the classes are constitutive of each other. Consider the following discussion of the relation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie:

> Proletariat and wealth are opposites; as such they form a single whole. They are both forms of the world of private property ... Private property as private property, as wealth, is compelled to maintain itself, and thereby its opposite, the proletariat, in existence ... The proletariat, on the other hand, is compelled as proletariat to abolish itself and thereby its opposite, the condition for its

> existence, what makes it the proletariat, *i.e.*, private property... The proletariat executes the sentence that private property pronounced on itself by begetting the proletariat, just as it carries out the sentence that wage labor pronounced on itself by bringing forth wealth for others and misery for itself. When the proletariat is victorious, it by no means becomes the absolute side of society, for it is victorious only by abolishing itself and its opposite. Then the proletariat disappears as well as the opposite which determines it, private property.[43]

The private ownership of the means of production, and we are speaking now about its bourgeois form, gives rise to antagonistic economic classes. It creates, on the one hand, the wealth which the owners appropriate to themselves and, on the other hand, it generates the mass of wage laborers who have little or no control over the conditions of their own labor, the proportion of its value they receive, and indeed whether they work at all. The interests of these two classes necessarily collide, since the wealth of the owners increases only to the detriment of the workers, and vice versa. The important point for us, however, is not the inherent antagonism of the two dominant classes in bourgeois society, but the fact that they are each constitutive of the other. The owners of the means of production require the existence of wage labor. Without wage labor there would be no capitalist class. This is why the often heard defense of bourgeois society, *i.e.*, that its virtue is that everyone can be a capitalist if he wishes to and works hard enough, is absurd. Such a claim commits the crucial mistake of confusing "everyone" with "anyone". While it is true, from a legal perspective at least, that anyone can be a capitalist, it is not true that everyone can. Wage labor, and thus a proletariat, is a constituent of the private appropriation of surplus value, *i.e.*, of the bourgeois class.

By the same token, the proletariat is such only because there is another class whose members own the means of production. Wage labor is itself a function of private property. Without private ownership of the means of production there would be no proletariat. Thus the bourgeoisie is constitutive of the proletariat. This complex relation is crucial for Marx' analysis, and it explains why the proletariat destroys both itself and the bourgeoisie when it eliminates the private ownership of the means of production. The antagonistic classes of bourgeois society, on Marx' analysis, are constitutively related, a point the importance of which is both theoretical and practical.

Since Marx was an active participant in the labor movement of his day, he was often drawn into conflicts with colleagues over interpretations of contemporary situations and the detailed programs for action. One such conflict is evident in his critique of the *Gotha Program*, his response to the political program drawn up by a congress

of German Socialists in 1875. In one passage, the program refers to the equal rights of all members of society to the "whole proceeds of labor", and that consequently there should be an equitable distribution of social wealth. Marx objects to this formulation on the grounds that it appeals to an abstract, eternal conception of "right", while it should, he argues, understand "rights" as comprehensible only in relation to the specific situation under consideration:

> What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges.

The ideal conception of rights expounded in the *Gotha Program*, Marx argues, does not take into account the fact that rights are necessarily related to, *i.e.*, determined or constituted in part by, the level of material development of the society in question: "Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined." Thus on Marx' view an appeal to an equal right to the proceeds of labor in a socialist society just emerging from capitalism would be a grave practical error. Where the right must be equal, he says, is not in the proceeds of labor but in the standard by which one's remuneration is determined. In a young socialist society, then, all members receive a share of the proceeds of labor on the basis of an equal application of a standard, in this case one's contribution. A more egalitarian principle of distribution is only possible, Marx says, when individuals are no longer subordinated by labor, when labor becomes not merely a "means to live," and "after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly...".[44]

The two points about this discussion of rights which need to be emphasized are the relational character of rights and the practical importance of a relational analysis. In a manner consistent with his general dialectical and materialist principles, Marx rejects any hint of an appeal to eternal, immutable phenomena. Rights are no less constitutively related to other natural phenomena than is anything else. Furthermore, the adequacy of this general perspective implies its practical significance. To generate social policies, even if only in a political program, which are inconsistent with the nature of the relevant phenomena is to court disaster in social affairs. This close relation between theory and practice has been characteristic of Marxist thought from the beginning, and to this day considerable importance is placed by that tradition on the careful study of technical philosophy. The reasons for such an emphasis are evident in Marx' own works.

Just as Marx develops a dialectical conception of the category of class and of the principles of equality and rights, so his analysis of the many constituents of any given society is equally dialectical, *i.e.*, relational. Marx' well-known distinction between the economic base of a society and its ideological, institutional and self-conscious superstructure has often been accused of leading to economic determinism, such that all the institutional and ideal characteristics of a society could be accounted for by tracing their mechanical causal relations to the economic foundations of the society. This interpretation of the Marxian view was made even in Marx' own time, and on more than one occasion Engels tried to clarify the position.[45] The conception of the structure of a given society as developed in Marx' 'work, in Engels', and in their joint productions, is materialist in that it holds that the various features of a society are bound to be consistent with the material requirements of its members and the means and structures they employ to meet those requirements. It is at the same time dialectical, however, in that a society's superstructural elements are not simply the consequences of economic factors, but themselves play an important constitutive role in the development of the economic base itself. Engels, for example, says that

> Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic *etc.* development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic base. It is not that the economic position is the cause and alone active, while everything else only has a passive effect. There is, rather, interaction on the basis of the economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself.[46]

A society's economic base and its superstructural elements are constitutively related to each other. Bourgeois relations of production, for example, bring to the fore appropriate political and legal conceptions, while at the same time a given political or legal theory influences, often in significant ways, the economic relations of a society through property laws, tariff regulations, *etc.*

Not only is the relation between the base and superstructure a complex, constitutive one, but Marx talks in similar ways about the economic foundation itself. In his well-known passage from the *Critique of Political Economy,* for example, he says:

> In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will.... The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society ...[47]

The form of production and distribution of material goods which dominates in a given society is constituted by the relations in which producers, distributors and consumers stand to each other. Capitalism, for example, is characterized by certain kinds of dominant relations. An employer has a much different relation to his employees than they have to each other, and the set of relations as a whole is a function of the relation of each to the productive forces of the society. An owner wields the power that he does by virtue of his specific relation to the forces of production, *i.e.*, he owns them. Thus the economic structure in general is constituted by the relations of the members of society to the forces of production and their relations to each other. Marx describes the fundamental significance of these relations in his attempt to show the source of a society's dominant ideas:

> The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore the ideas of its dominance.[48]

These examples of Marx' dialectical analyses are all very general, though their generality is due to the basic role they play in the theory of historical materialism. The same general principles of analysis can be found, however, in any of Marx' more detailed studies, particularly his later economic and historical research. Throughout his treatment of social affairs, Marx never fails to discuss his subject matter in terms of the complex set of relations which constitute it. The materialist and dialectical principles evident in Marx' studies are precisely the same as those on which Engels and Lenin based their respective inquiries into the general problems of nature and ontology. Without these guiding principles of materialism and the complex constitution of all natural phenomena, including social affairs, Marx would not have been able to develop his analyses in such an overtly dialectical fashion. This is why it was suggested earlier that the theory of historical materialism is inconsistent with any general worldview, any ontological perspective, other than dialectical materialism. And the ontological perspective of dialectical materialism is, as we have been arguing, that the phenomena which constitute nature are not comprehensible in terms of immutable, essential substances or simples. And this is precisely the view developed by Dewey and reflected in the more recent work of philosophical naturalists.

I have been arguing for a certain affinity between the ontological views of Dewey and Marx, and of naturalism and dialectical materialism generally. That affinity is, however, of a very general sort, and it should not be allowed to obscure the fact that there are very important

differences between the two traditions as well. While both Dewey and Marx argue that change and process are fundamental and generic traits of all natural phenomena, Dewey nowhere develops anything comparable to the dialectical-materialist concept of contradiction. Marx, Engels and Lenin all held that among the complex constituents of any phenomenon there are traits with contradictory tendencies, and that these constitutive contradictions account for process and change. Neither Dewey, Randall nor Buchler argue for such a view. It is an open question, though, and one which merits further investigation, whether such a view ought to be an aspect of the naturalist position, which is to say that it is possible that Marx *et al.* were right in positing contradiction as a generic trait of all phenomena. Whether change is really as fundamental as Marx, and even Dewey, held has also been disputed. Buchler, for example, who has developed the most detailed ontology of complexes and constitutive relations, does not agree with Dewey that change and process are generic, ontological categories. While all complexes prevail in some order or other, Buchler does not argue that all complexes necessarily alesce as well. Again, it is possible that alescence ought to be regarded as a generic trait, but such a position awaits a more careful and detailed inquiry within the categorial framework of ordinal ontology. There are, then, a number of points of contention between the naturalist and dialectical-materialist traditions, but there is as well a central point of agreement between the two, one which allows for a more fruitful contact than has hitherto been the case.

NOTES

1. See especially John H. Randall, Jr., *Nature and Historical Experience*, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1962, and Justus Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1966.

2. See for example Milton Fisk, 'Dialectic and Ontology' in John Mepham and D-H. Ruben, (eds.), *Issues in Marxist Philosophy*, Vol. I, Atlantic Highlands, N.J., Humanities Press, Inc., 1979, pp. 117-143. See also Bertell Ollman, *Alienation*, N.Y., Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp. 26-40.

3. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1979.

4. John McMurtry, *The Structure of Marx's World-View*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 5.

5. Ted Benton, 'Natural Science and Cultural Struggle: Engels and Philosophy and the Natural Sciences', in Mepham and Ruben, *op. cit.* Vol. II, pp. 101-142.

6. Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1978, p. 14.

7. V.I. Lenin's reference is in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, N.Y., International Publishers, 1972, p. 252.

8. See for example Marx' *Theses on Feuerbach*, in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, N.Y., International Publishers, 1975, Vol. 5, pp. 3-8. (Hereafter *M-ECW*)

9. Marx said that "Darwin's book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural science for the class struggle in history." Cited in a footnote by Howard Selsam and Harry Martel, the editors of *Reader in Marxist Philosophy*, N.Y., International Publishers, 1984, p. 188.

10. One might add to this list a reminder that Marx was interested from his student years on in general philosophic questions. His dissertation was on the subject of ancient Greek materialism, and he dealt with philosophic problems and the history of philosophy in such early works as the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* and *The Holy Family*. See respectively *M-ECW*, Vol. 1, pp. 25-105, Vol. 3, pp. 229-346, and Vol. 4, pp. 5-211.

11. John Dewey, *A Common Faith*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1934.

12. Frederich Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1969, pp. 19-20.

13. *Ibid.* p. 23.

14. *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, p. 267.

15. *Ibid.* p. 267.

16. *Ibid.* p. 268.
17. *Ibid.* p. 267.
18. *Ibid.* p. 269.
19. *Anti-Dühring.*, p. 36.
20. See in particular Buchler's 'On the Concept of "The World"', *Review of Metaphysics*, June, 1978, pp. 555-579, his 'Probing the Idea of Nature', *Process Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 157-168, and also *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, p. 3.
21. Dewey remarked, in fact, that "since 'matter' and 'materialism' acquired their significance in contrast with something called 'spirit and spiritualism,' the fact that naturalism has no place for the latter also deprives the former epithets of all significance in philosophy." 'Antinaturalism in Extremis', in Yervant H. Krikorian, (ed.), *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1944, p. 3.
22. See William James, 'Does Consciousness Exist?', in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, N.Y., E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1971, pp. 3-22.
23. Sheldon's article, 'A Critique of Naturalism', originally appeared in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XLII, No. 10, May 10, 1945. The Dewey, Hook and Nagel piece appeared originally in the same journal, Vol. XLII, No. 19, September 13, 1945. Both articles are reprinted in S. Morgenbesser (ed.), *Dewey and his Critics*, N.Y., The Journal of Philosophy, Inc., 1977, pp. 367-384 and 385-400 respectively.
24. E.V. Ilyenkov, 'The Concept of the Ideal', in *Philosophy in the USSR, Problems of Dialectical Materialism*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977, p. 78.
25. 'Are Naturalists Materialists?', p. 390.
26. John Dewey, 'The Subject Matter of Metaphysical Inquiry', in Richard J. Bernstein, (ed.), *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, N.Y., The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1960, pp. 211-223. Cf. pp. 213-215.
27. John Dewey, 'Nature in Experience', in Bernstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-260. Cf. p. 252.
28. 'The Subject Matter of Metaphysical Inquiry', p. 222.
29. 'Nature in Experience', p. 248.
30. *Ibid.* pp. 246-247.
31. *Ibid.* p. 249. The continuity of experience with other natural phenomena is a fundamental theme of *Experience and Nature*, J.A. Boydston, (ed.), *The Later Works of John Dewey*, Vol. 1, Carbondale, Illinois, Southern Illinois University Press, 1981.
32. 'The Subject Matter of Metaphysical Inquiry', p. 220.
33. *Nature and Historical Experience*, p. 148.
34. John Dewey, *Logic, The Theory of Inquiry*, N.Y., Holt,

Rinehart and Winston, 1960, pp. 66-67.

35. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1957, p. 87.

36. *Logic*, p. 68.

37. Cf. *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, Chapter III.

38. *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, p. 267.

39. *Ludwig Feuerbach*, pp. 39-40.

40. Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1972, p. 62.

41. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, in Selsam and Martel, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

42. *The Holy Family*, in *M-ECW*, Vol. 4, p. 120.

43. *Ibid.* pp. 35-36.

44. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, N.Y., International Publishers, 1977, pp. 8-10.

45. Cf. in particular Engels' letter to Heinz Starkenburg, 1894, and his letter to Joseph Block, 1890. Both are in Selsam and Martel, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-187.

46. Letter to Starkenburg.

47. Marx, *Critique of Political Economy*, in Selsam and Martel, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-187.

48. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, in *M-ECW*, Vol. 5, p.59.

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